

Edwin Waugh

4° P.O. angl. 52 £/6

WAUGH'S COMPLETE WORKS.

VOL. VI.

84/2059



THE WANDERING FIDDLER.
(From original sketch by Henry Measham.)

Irish Sketches;

AND MISCELLANY.

By EDWIN WAUGH.



MANCHESTER:

JOHN GOSWOLD, GEORGE HENRI, AND KENNEDY, JOHN DALTON STREET,
AND 11, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, LONDON.

1852



THE WANDERING FIDDLER
(From original sketch by Henry Monahan, F)

Irish Sketches;

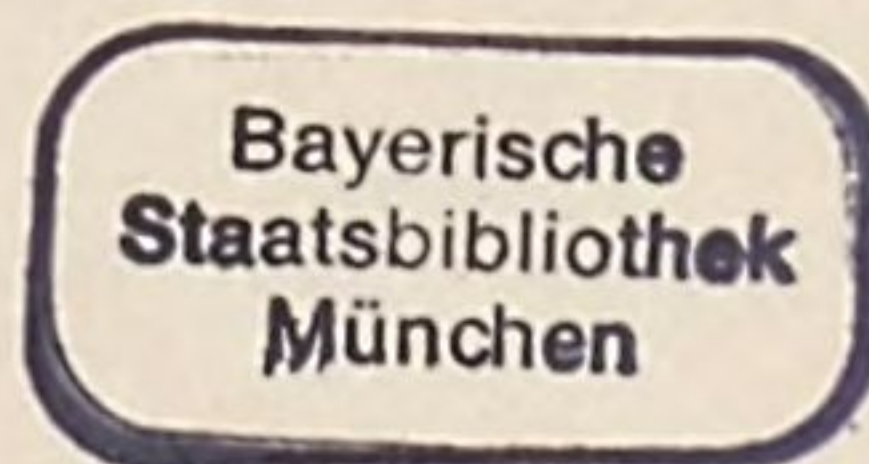
AND MISCELLANY.

By EDWIN WAUGH.



MANCHESTER:
JOHN HEYWOOD, DEANS GATE, AND RIDGEFIELD, JOHN DALTON STREET;
AND 11, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, LONDON.
1882.

JOHN HEYWOOD, PRINTER, HULME HALL ROAD,
MANCHESTER.



TO
THOMAS READ WILKINSON,
OF MANCHESTER.



CONTENTS

	PAGE.
TO ERIN'S ISLE.....	I
BELFAST TO PORTRUSH	17
PORTRUSH	27
RACY PECULIARITIES	38
EAVES-DROPPING	47
THE COAST ROAD	52
DUNLUCE CASTLE.....	61
DUNLUCE TO THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY	70
THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY	80
MY LODGING BY THE SEA.....	89
AN IRISH PATRIARCH	121
THE ISLE OF RATHLIN	128
A COLD MORNING.....	171
WRECK ASHORE.....	177
ULSTER NOTES	186
THE IRISH FISHWIFE	208
THE OLD COAL MAN	213
THE TWELVE APOSTLES.....	229
DENNIS; OR, THE IRISH OYSTER MAN	234
TO PADDY'S LAND	238



To Erin's Isle.

Green be thy fields, sweetest isle of the ocean.

CAMPBELL.

I LEFT Manchester for Fleetwood, by the quarter to five train, in the afternoon. It was a fast train, and I was glad of it. But, before I go any farther, let me give the tourist a hint. There is a train to the same place at a quarter *past* five. Don't go by that, if you can catch the one before it. The latter train is slow, and usually full; and when the traveller arrives at Fleetwood, he has to hustle his way through a clamorous swarm of passengers and porters, all rushing helter-skelter for the boat; and when he has wriggled his way down to the saloon, he finds the best berths taken up. All is crush and confusion; the steward is besieged by an aggressive crowd, all talking at once; and he must put up with anything he can get,—and wait till he can get it. In the meantime, the “early birds,” with their luggage housed, and the best berths engaged, lounge about the fringe of the uproar, enjoying the troubles which they need not share. Unless you are young, and strong, and like disturbance, take the train at a quarter to five, instead of that at a quarter past five. It is a fast

train, and rarely a full one ; and when you reach Fleetwood you can get comfortably on board, without let or hindrance ; and unoccupied porters compete for the honour of bearing your burdens. All is calm on the pier,—and all is calm on the boat, where you will find the bland steward, sitting at a little table, clothed, in his right mind, with the list of berths before him, and the feather-end of a quill-pen in his mouth, ready to put you in for a good thing. . . . Well, as I said before, I left by the early train. . . . “Tickets, please !” . . . The doors are closing. One after another I hear them going to, with an official bang. . . . “All right !” . . . The wheels begin to waken up from their short nap, and, as we move off, the lingerers,—(there are people so habitually behind-hand that they seem to like the perturbation of the thing ; it becomes a necessary stimulus of their existence ; and they are always to be found stranded among the shallows of life, till death drifts them into the shoreless ocean from whence there is no returning sail ; there are others who pride themselves upon running the thing as fine as possible, to show their dexterity : and these generally end by breaking their necks),—but, apart from that,—the foolish virgins,—by-the-by, some of them are not virgins,—however, “all’s one for that,”—the foolish virgins come rushing up to the departing train as if it was their last chance of procrastinated salvation ; one after another they come, panting and perspiring, and have to be pushed into the carriages at the risk of their limbs. The last of them is dragged back by the porters, as he is making a frantic effort to get in at a window. We leave him there, puffing, and staring, and

mopping the moisture from his limited forehead, as we glide across the slimy Irwell. I am sure that if that once pellucid home of the finny tribes,—if that filth-conquered solitude, where now no fish abide,—has any sense of its fallen estate, it cannot object to the phrase. Away we went across the Irwell, and through an atmosphere that seemed to clog the wheels of the struggling train. Away we went, over a forest of undistinguished chimney-tops,—and over the swarming streets of dingy, tasteless, but, unhappily, not flavourless Salford,—depressing to the mind, and delightless to the eye. How any ordinary son of Adam can exist, year after year, in that weltering gutter of gin-shops and slutch, without becoming utterly reprobate, surpasses me to know. But, thank Heaven, there is a strange vitality in the human heart, which can cleave the bounds of outward circumstance, and soar into regions that neither smoke, nor stench, nor unrelieved gloom, nor glaring ugliness, nor boiling cauldrons of unholy witch-broth, nor “the inhuman dearth of noble natures,” can utterly contaminate. Adieu,—sweet charnel-house! The air smells of hearses, and prison-vans, and adulterated drink, and festering cesspools. Adieu, for a while. . . . The tower of Manchester Cathedral recedes. The dingy little episcopal chapel of Salford,—which looks smoky and dissipated, and redolent of the public-house aromas around,—which looks as if it was sick of a whole century of pithless sermonry; and, in spite of the noble liturgy which its walls have listened to so long, was beginning, at last, to give in to “the world, the flesh, and the devil,” as it stands there, in the midst of its native Gomorrah, like Lot’s wife, unable to fly to the

mountain, and awaiting, in gloomy petrification, the general impending doom. Poor old chapel ! As it fades away in the smoke behind us, it reminds one of an unfrocked parson. The prison, the park, the spires of St. Stephen's and St. John's, and everything else of mark, that helps to relieve or deepen the gloom that pervades Her Majesty's ancient borough of Salford, glides by, until that Dead Sea of monotonous brick melts into Pendleton,—where, here and there, one begins to recognise a patch of grass, trying to look green. These patches grow larger and greener as we go, till the last dribblets of Pendleton die away into the vale of Clifton ; and the fair face of nature, blithe in her posied mantle of spring, fills all the air with a restorative charm. The green vale of Clifton,—part of the Pilkington estates, forfeited by Sir Thomas Pilkington, for his adherence to Richard the Third, at Bosworth Field,—the vale of Clifton, with Kersall Cell, where one of the Byrons of the olden time retired from courts and battle-fields, to end his days in monkish seclusion,—the quiet valley, with its winding stream, its green cloughs, and woody slopes, overlooked by the ancient tower of Prestwich Church, glides away behind us. We pass many a picturesque little clough, bright and gay in the fresh greenery of spring,—with, here and there, a dusky colliery, and here and there a mill,—till, at length, we come to the smoke and bustle of Bolton-le-Moors, a spot associated with so many remarkable men, and so many stirring memories of times gone by. Bolton ! These great manufacturing towns of Lancashire succeed one another upon the line, at short distances, like beads of ebony upon an iron string. The railways of Lancashire are great

rosaries of industrial life. The next town we come to is Chorley; and, as we spin away from the station, I get a glimpse of the grey tower of the parish church, the burial-place of the Standish family,—which awakened remembrances of Miles Standish, the Puritan captain, whose story is told so well by Longfellow. Now Chorley has disappeared; and, as we run across Leyland towards “Proud Preston,” the declining sun lights up the lofty ruin of Hoghton Tower with a special radiance. The approach to Preston is a pleasant sight on a fine day. The handsome southern skirt of the town, with the park sloping therefrom; the beautiful stream; and the whole landscape, as far as the eye can reach, make up a noble picture. And then there is a rich aroma of old romance about the history of Preston that has its charm. The Romans had a strong camp there; as was proven by that careful antiquary, Mr. Charles Hardwick; and Preston has seen a great deal of the stirring events of English history, especially during the Cromwellian wars, and the Scottish rebellions. Even in our own day, it has played an active part in the great drama of northern life. But now, Preston is past. Farewell, for a while, to the grand old county Palatine,—the country of bravery and true gentleness,—the country of warm-hearted, frank, out-spoken men and women—the country of long chimneys, spooming spindles, and restless enterprise,—farewell! Farewell,—for a while, and welcome to the wild ocean, and the bonny boat that bears me to the sea-beaten shore of Ireland. Now, all the way leads through the sweet-scented country green. The evening sun is sinking beyond the Fylde; and a fresh breeze from

the west sweeps across the posied plain. The grey tower of Poulton church fades away ; and, one after another, white cottages and bowery hamlets flit by. The solemn witchery of the sea begins to steal upon me ; and my heart fills with a sense of its freedom and freshness. At one of the quiet stations a square-built young Lancashire fisher gets into the carriage, accompanied by an admiring friend, whom he has just met with. The young fisher is communicative to his friend ; and tells him that he has “nobbud bin six weeks wed, an’ he’s two stone heavier o’ready !” “Never, sewer !” replies his friend ;—“never, sewer ! Get end’ays wi tho, owd lad ! Thaa’ll be a bonny weight in a bit,—i’ tho doesn’t get takken daan !” The young fisher then looks quietly through the window, and says, “There’s for evermoor o’ gam’ abaat here !” His friend replies, “Ay,—oi know that,—varra weel !” They are silent a little while ; and then the last speaker turns to the young fisher again, and says, “I guess thaa’rt noan teetotal, Jack, arto ?” “Noan soa !” replied Jack ; “noan soa, marry ! There war a chap i’ Pou’ton as axed me one day if I’d sign,—an’ be a brother,—but I tow’d him that I wur nought at o’ related to th’ family,—an’ I had noa thowts o’ being.” They are silent again for a minute or two ; and then the young fisher takes up the same theme again. I begin to suspect that he is rather of a boastful and exaggerative disposition, too, for he says to his friend, “Sitho, Bill ! I can ston twenty glasses o’ brandy, an’ feel naa wur for’t ;—naa then ! I’ve hed fifteen to-day, o’ready,—an’ look at mo naa !” To which a grey old shaver in the opposite corner of the carriage replied, quietly, “That’ll not last long.”

. . . We are approaching Fleetwood now ; for, off at the right hand of the line, I see white sails gliding along the "Shard ;" and the masts in the harbour are drawing near. I suppose the word "shard" is derived from our word "shred." A shred of the sea,—which is exactly what the Shard is,—for the sea rushes up the narrow channel of the Wyre some two or three miles, and then widens out at the Shard into a kind of lake,—remarkable, among other things, for those fine mussels known by the name of "Hambleton Hookin's." . . . Here we are, at Fleetwood ! The tide is rising ; and great logs of pine, upon the banks of the Wyre, are beginning to float again. The train stops at the station, and an amateur porter offers to take my luggage to the boat in his cart for a shilling, and away he goes with it.

. . . At the pier there is a little crowd, waiting for the train,—railway porters, fishermen, idlers, and an eager, thoughtfully-planted array of touters for places of refreshment,—of the milder kind. A bleary-eyed virgin, with a printed card in her hand, and a quarter of a pound of blue glass swinging at the flap of each ear, rushes towards me,—“like a cock at a bilberry,”—and inquires, over and over again, at the different departments of my face, if I want any tea. I don't feel as if I did want any tea ; and I tell her so, in rapidly-diminishing tones of painfully-assumed civility. She turns away at last, and I get free,—I don't know how,—only I know that I don't go to tea. But I have no sooner wriggled out of her well-sustained importunity, than I perceive that there are several others, of the same kidney, waiting, in single file, to assail me in like manner. I have to run the gauntlet ; and I do it, somehow. And

at last, as I descend the wooden stairs in peace, I soothe my ruffled temper by the thought that, after all, they are trying to get an honest living. . . . There are few passengers by this train, and there is no bustle. The steward sits serene and solitary before his list of berths, with an unemployed pen in his hand ; and I seem to have all the vessel to myself. "You can have any of these berths," says he, waving his hand at the wide world,—like Noah, after the deluge had gone down. I chose one on the lower tier, where I shall have no climbing to do. "What number is it, steward?" "Fifty-six, sir," replied he ; and from that moment, till I land upon the pier of Belfast, I feel that I am a kind of "Fifty-six ;" and now I have an hour and a half to myself, before the last train comes in, with its cargo of perspiring uproar. For a while, I go maundering up and down the boat, looking dreamily at ropes, and buckets, and things, and muttering "Fifty-six" to myself, with a vacant mind ; and, even in this moony state, I gradually become aware of the presence of the old steamboat aroma, which pervades every nook of the vessel with a curious sickliness. It seems to arise from a mixture of burnt fat, bad whisky, sperm oil, soft soap, bilge-water, furniture paste, and railway tickets. . . . As I paced the deck, the air was keen, and it seemed singularly clear to the eyes of one long time in city pent. The hues of sunset were flushing the outlines of the distant Cumberland hills with splendour ; and the green level of Preeshall, on the opposite side of the Wyre, gradually faded into a dusky tract of indistinguishable shade. There was not a soul in sight upon the pier, now, and very little stir upon the boat. The luggage was covered up, and

there were fewer passengers than usual. Two or three sailors were lounging about the deck, looking lazy and listless ; but you could see at a glance that there was a great deal of slumbering work in those quiet fellows, which would waken up when it was wanted. One of them was crooning, as he paced slowly to and fro—

For, oh, a light heart, and a thin pair o' breeches,
Will carry you over the world, brave boys.

Now and then a boat glided noiselessly across the Wyre ; and the ripples of the tide were tinged with the glow of declining day. There was a fine new carriage on board, muffled up in tarpaulin ; and as I went down below I could not help wondering what grandee it was intended for. There were very few people in the saloon. A kind of stately hush pervaded that dimly-lighted scene of mirrored splendour ; and when I heard the steward whisper something about "Lady Dufferin's page," a kind of tremour came over me. I looked slyly from one to another, thinking to myself, "That'll be the duke, or something !" But as there was no outward and visible sign to distinguish those about me from ordinary mortals, I gradually grew calmer ; and, going aloft, I tried to talk with the men who were lounging about ; but nobody seemed to have anything to say ; so I made up my mind for a stroll into the town. . . . Well, everybody knows what Fleetwood is,—indeed, there isn't much to know. To a man accustomed to city life, a walk in Fleetwood is like taking a cold bath. It is the same place still,—in the same chrysalis condition. Healthy, I dare say. The natives look remarkably so.

But it is the same Fleetwood, still. Deadly-lively, and desolately clean. The whole town looks as if it was waiting for something, and the quiet streets seem to gape,—like hungry mouths longing to be filled. Two soldiers from the barracks, smart as Durham mustard, and clean as new pins, from top to toe, are pacing abreast, with martial precision, leering at the girls and swinging penny switches as they go, with all the footpath to themselves. They seem to know that all creation is standing still, in amazement, as they go by. Here and there a slow-motioned fisherman saunters along, at the rate of thirteen miles in fourteen hours. But, yonder, a railway porter hurries across the street, to the hotel, on a message,—which makes that part of the town look busy,—for he is the liveliest thing in sight except a lad, at the street end, who is dancing single-step, with his lips cocked, and his hands in his pockets, and his eyes staring forth into the wide world. Many people go through Fleetwood ; but nobody seems to stop in it ; and yet it is not in any way a disagreeable or a dirty town ; indeed, there is a kind of shivery cleanliness about the whole place,—a chillness, a stillness, and a slow-motioned monotony. It has a lean and ravenous look,—like a gaunt schoolboy, who is a great deal washed, and not much fed. It seems to have short hair, and long teeth. It is a cold bit of raw young town, which may haply come to something yet,—if it has luck. Standing upon this watery end of the Fylde, it looks like a clean-cut model, set upon a counter for sale. Its streets seem hungry for footing. It has no trees, that I can see ; but there is a kind of greenishness about the outskirts, which is supposed

to be grass. The principal building in the place is a barracks,—a kind of military factory, filled with fighting machinery. It was first built for an hotel; but it wore out its heart in waiting for custom, that never came. After standing for a long time, with empty rooms, gasping for sustenance, like a dying fish upon a stall, it took to soldiering, in despair. Indeed, the whole town has the air of a decent artizan, out of work, and trying to maintain a respectable appearance, till a job turns up. And yet, “as safe as Wyre,” as the saying is, the day is coming when Fleetwood will flower out into beauty and healthful activity. But I hear a whistle in the distance, which warns me that I must return to the boat; for the last train is approaching. I got to the boat in time to plant myself in a quiet spot, from whence I could see the bustle. . . . The train came puffing up to the pier; and for a quarter of an hour or so the gangway was choked with a crowd of passengers and porters, all crushing down to the vessel, like water gulping through the neck of a full bottle. In about half an hour, and before the passengers had got shaken down into their places, the boat began to move away from the pier,—and now for a fine night at sea!

The evening was beautifully clear; and, as we steamed slowly down the Wyre, Fleetwood and its low-lying shore melted into the shade behind us. The last bit of the town discernible was the great cold-looking barracks, staring after the boat, as if there was a deserter on board. The green level of Preeshall grew more and more indistinct; and then all the rearward seemed a wilderness of waves. The waters of the open sea were heaving around us, and the boat began

to churn, and plunge, and dance, as if it rejoiced in the freedom and power of the bounding element that bore it onward like a plaything. All traces of Fleetwood had become dim ; and yet, as we glided along, the bugles at the barracks were singing the soldier to rest ; and I heard the same strain ring out, again and again, from different parts of the town, as we churned seaward, under the deepening shade of night. There were three camp-stools planted on the lee-side of the funnel, behind where the captain stood. It is snug and warm there,—or, rather, it is very hot on one side, and cold on the other. I sit down to gaze at the dark, mysterious waters, and listen to the churning paddles. “Starboard !” says the captain. “Starboard, sir !” replies the man at the wheel. “Steady !” “Steady, sir !” “Nor'-west-by-north !” “Nor'-west-by-north, sir—r !” and so on, till we got well away from the mouth of the Wyre ; and then the captain sat down, and began to chat with an old friend,—keeping a bright eye upon the waters ahead all the while. The lights along the Lancashire and Cumberland coast grow more dim and distant ; and the sea looks solemnly grand, by the light of the stars ! I sit by the funnel, with the smoke flying over my head, across the gloomy waters,—the heat at my back, and the cold in front. The captain's friend comes from somewhere about Birkenhead. They are talking about bicycles. The captain's friend tells some wonderful stories of his feats upon the velocipede. He tells some stories, indeed, that would stagger,—even the marines. He is a fabulist. The captain thinks so, too ; for, after a pause, and a sigh that seems to say, “Lord, how

this world is given to lying!" he looks quietly up at the smoke flying over-head, and says, "Our new-painted mast is catching it!" And now, a man comes from the other side of the funnel, and reports to the captain,—“A light, well off on the port bow, sir!” “Yes,” replies the captain, “I see it!” The captain’s friend is beginning his romance again, as a tall gentleman comes up to the funnel, leading a muffled lady, who is evidently a little qualmish. We all rise to give her a seat. The gentleman and his lady sit down, by the funnel. She is not well; and she lays her head upon his breast.

As twilight deepened into the solemn grandeur of a cloudless night, the moon, entering her third quarter, arose in the cloudless sky, tinging the air with a quiet radiance, delicately-beautiful; and all along the coast of Cumberland, the mariner’s lights burn clear again. It was a lovely night. Wind and tide were in our favour; and we went merrily over the waters blue. It was hardly ten o’clock when the Isle of Man was in full view; and the home of the ancient wizard, McLir, looked weirdly-beautiful in the soft moon-light. Its green shore, with wild Snaefell overlooking the scene, seemed as lonely as if the foot of man had never wandered there; till we came opposite to Ramsey, where the lights in the little town were still burning. Soon after eleven we passed the light on the “Point of Ayr,”—the last relic of “Mona the lone, where the silver mist gathers;” and, again, we were in the open sea; all around us one wild water, all above us one blue sky. I began to think that the passage would be an unusually short one, till the captain informed me that, for the rest of our course, we

should have the tide against us ; and that, probably, we should not reach Belfast before six in the morning ; and so it proved in the end. And now comes in "the sweetest morsel of the night," when the weather is fine, as it was with me. For the next three hours we steamed along the lonely sea, beneath the moon's unclouded light ; and the heavens were gorgeous with the far-streaming splendour of the aurora borealis. I felt that such a night was never made for sleep ; and, hour after hour, I paced the deck, or lay wrapped up, at full length, and in a contemplative doze, till the night air roused me up to action again. I tried to rest below, too, but it was of no use. There I lay, in a neat cupboard, two feet three, by six feet long, staring up at a patch of white ceiling, within eighteen inches of my nose,—and longing for the light of day. It was no use ! The attentions of "nature's soft nurse" were absorbed by these snoring pets of hers in the other berths about me ; and really, when I looked round at them, out of that little purgatory of mine, I could not for the life of me, understand why the old girl had given them the preference. But,

Fate will have her way, brave boys,
Let a man do what he can !

Sleep would not "weigh mine eyelids down ;" and the beauty of the night haunted me so that I returned to the deck again. And when the coast of Galloway drew near, and the soft footfall of morning came over the distant Scottish hills, what a new and indescribable loveliness dawned upon land and sea ! Tired in body as I was, all feeling of drowsiness was, for the time, at an end with me ; for every foot of our watery way, henceforward, was full of interest. On the

east, the coast of Scotland, with the dark foreland of the Mull of Galloway, looming proudly over the sea, beneath the brightening morning sky ; on the west, the picturesque shore of county Down, and the Mourn mountains, with great Slieve Donard, dominant above them all. As we enter the lough, and its banks draw nearer to the eye, the details of the landscape become still more beautiful, especially on the western side. All the way it was so ; until we came in sight of the mud-banks at the head of the lough, which, of course, are not enchanting in themselves. And now we have passed the last lighthouse, which stands in the midst of the waters, like a great iron-legged monster, which has stuck fast in wading across the lough ; and, as we glide by "Queen's Island," up the narrow channel, which leads to the pier, the passengers begin to rush up from below, and gather, in a fidgetty crowd, round the pile of luggage ; most of them with something in hand,—a rug, a hat-box, a satchel, a carpet-bag, or an umbrella. The passage has been so fine that there are not so many sickly faces amongst them as usual. Here and there, indeed, there is one who looks spruce, and fresh, and "point device in his accoutrements," as if he had slept well, and taken pains with his toilet, and was now ready for appearance on any stage. Few of them, however, are dressed "up to the knocker" in this way ; and there is one batch,—a boisterous beery companionship of four,—who sat up late, drinking, and playing at cards,—they have a seedy aspect, from top to toe, now that they come to the light, and they bid one another "Good morning !" with a kind of Arctic grin,—like icicles, pretending to be warm.

I feel jaded, myself, after my sweet, but sleepless night ; and I dare say that I look as ill as anybody on board. But, now, everybody is beginning to glare anxiously at the pile of luggage, and each seems afraid that his own is about to be whisked away from under his nose, in a clandestine manner, "before he knows where he is," as they say, and then, to increase the perturbation of the timid traveller, the edge of the pier is crowded with a horde of wild-eyed fiends, in the shape of porters, with brass tickets on their arms, standing ready to spring upon the vessel, the moment it gets within leaping-reach,—like a tribe of Bedouin Arabs, pouncing upon the baggage of a helpless caravan. The poor fellows are not so bad, after all, when you come to know them. They are trying to get a living by hard work,—and they deserve all they get. But here they are ! and here am I, at the pier of Belfast ; once more, "In Erin's isle, to sport a while."





Belfast to Portrush.

And thus, by many winding nooks he strays.
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.

SHAKESPEARE.

YOU know already how I got to Belfast; and you know, also, that Belfast is chiefly famous for ships, linen, whisky, and firkin butter. Well, the butter is good, of its kind; but I would rather have it fresh than salted. And then, the only sea-craft of which I am owner are two painted ships, upon a painted ocean. I am slightly connected with linen, it is true; and eke with whisky, in a limited way; but I have no further interest in these commodities than my own consumption goes; so I had no commercial reason for lingering in that thriving haunt of amphibious life. I don't know where my linen comes from, but it is chiefly composed of cotton; and it is also of such charming variety of cut that if any stranger was to see my six shirts he would think they belonged to seven different men. As for my collars,—well, collars are a kind of floating capital, constantly undergoing exchange in one's rounds of visitation. They separate from one another in a curious way, and sometimes for a long time; and then, unexpectedly, they “meet again, like parted streams, and mingle as of old.” To-day I wear one man's collar, to-morrow another's,

like a Saxon serf changing masters. I sometimes sit down to read these sibylline slips of flaxen web, for they bear many a name that wakens up a surge of pleasant thought along "the pebbled shore of memory." So much for the linen. And now, a word about whisky. Happily for us all, drinking is not a fashionable vice in these days, and whisky, like a razor in the hands of a monkey, is a dangerous thing to play with; but, if I said I didn't like a taste of it now and then, I should be a distinguished member of the total abstinence from truth society. Perhaps the less one says about it the better; but the little I have tasted here has been good. Salt butter, ships, linen, whisky, and shindies,—my connection with these things is only of a trifling personal kind, so I did not stay in Belfast. There are places of great interest about it, too; and the lough is very fine; but none of these things could tempt me. As for the lough, I had been satisfied with that on my passage; and the smell of the engines, and the rock of the steamer, together with a sleepless night, had so sicklied me, that I longed to get to my journey's end, where I could find rest. And then, the general features of the town. Belfast is a mixture of Glasgow and Manchester, with a smack of salt water; and, having had enough of that sort of thing for the present, I rattled away from the pier to the station, upon a rickety car, with as little curiosity as if I had seen the place a thousand times. The only thing that made my heart look over its shoulder now and then into the wake of the departing car, was, that I had two or three friends in the place,—one of them a man of decided mark, too; for he has thrown more light upon the general condition of that

city than anybody that ever lived in it. But in spite of all this, I came away by the first available train.

There are two routes from Belfast to the Giant's Causeway: one by the far-famed Coast Road, which is lashed by the waves of the northern ocean, and leads through scenes of rocky grandeur and picturesque beauty; the other, and the shorter route, lies in a direct line, inland, passing by the old town of Antrim. One of the most perfect specimens of the round towers of Ireland is in sight from the Antrim station. The town stands near the head of Lough Neagh, the largest lake in the British islands. Massarene Castle is close to the town. Its embattled gateway stands at the head of the main street; and Shane's Castle, a ruined fortress of the ancient O'Neils, kings of Ulster, stands at the head of the lough, about two miles from the town. The distance is sixty-eight miles from Belfast to Portrush, the little bathing-place, at which the railway line terminates; and from whence we can go on by car, seven miles, to the Giant's Causeway. Well, to make a long story short, I took the inland route, from Belfast to Portrush. And now, here I am once more, wandering by the edge of the sea.

When I reached Portrush, about the middle of May, I found it comparatively dull and chill; for the cold skirts of winter had trailed farther than usual into summer time, and very few visitors had arrived. But, for my own part, I was glad to get there, for the sake of the quietness, and the sea; and then, the place always looks picturesque to me, even in its dullest aspect. And yet, winter life in bathing-places, which depend solely upon summer visitation for their existence, must be of a strange kind. I remember a village

of that sort, in another part of the world, which, during the summer months, was one ceaseless flutter of gay colours and fashionable life, from end to end. It seemed as if no amount of winter could ever cool its genial glow. By chance, however, I saw the same place in December ; and I found it sitting in shivery desolation, beneath a leaden sky. Fierce winds swept through its damp, untrodden streets, and the whole town had a funereal aspect. It looked more like a watery grave than the abode of living people. The poor, winter-smitten inhabitants,—who had to draw the breath in summer, which was to keep their bellows going through the remainder of the year,—seemed to be in the last gasp of expiring hope. There was a most unearthly melancholy about it, from end to end ; and its smokeless chimneys seemed to have uttered their last cry to the heavens for help. The monotonous patter of rain was audible in its silent thoroughfares, and the moan of a misty sea wandered through the place, laden with sighs of the drowned. It seemed as if all the inhabitants had been buried in damp earth, except one forlorn lingerer, left gazing, with stony eyes, through a rain-beaten window, into the wet street. Now and then the scream of a cormorant came from sea-beaten crags in the distance ; but there was not a living thing,—not even a starved dog,—to be seen. The liveliest thing in sight was a dead sea-gull, which lay upon the main street, soaking in the rain. Where the bird had fallen, there it rested ; for there was nobody to carry it away,—nobody to be offended by it,—except a wet rat, which came trailing its lean limbs through the mud, and, after smelling at the foul relic of mortality, trailed back again into

the hole which was soon to be its grave. "To Let," "To Let," "To Let," in every lonely window; and not a soul in sight to let anything,—not a soul to let anything to. It seemed as if the people had all died before they had time to take these melancholy tickets down. The whole town was "To Let." It looked like a place built with a view to the promotion of suicide,—with the King of Terrors as chairman of the board of works,—and all the elements conspiring to further the intention of its origin; or, like a town so long besieged that the defenders had eaten one another up,—all but one;—and the ghastly diet had made that despairing remnant irretrievably ill, with nobody left to smooth his damp pillow, and see him "draw away;" or, like a place suddenly brought to light after being submerged by the sea,—a place in which there was no life to be found but long-clawed marine creatures, creeping among the tangle and weeds that festooned its sea-steeped ruins. It was a place to build tombs out of. One solitary magpie sat motionless upon a ruined wall, with glazing eyes, and the rain dripping from closed beak, as if his mission in life was over; and, in a weedy back-yard, a famished and chickenless hen stood upon one leg, knee deep in water, waiting until that last prop should give way, that it might lie down in the water and die, like the rest. The wind itself had a down-hearted and husky tone,—as if it had got a severe cold. It was a sad and stirless scene, and the only sounds to be heard were the voices of nature—

Washing of the lonely seas, piping of the salted breeze
Day and night and day went by, to the endless tune of these.

I dare say, now, that some critical reader may say that this picture is overdrawn. Well, let us be thankful, and

pass on, with willing steps, to a livelier side of things. Certainly, Portrush has no connection with such a scene as this ; for, even in the depth of winter, it is sweet and picturesque ; and the stormy moods of the ocean, then, lend a grandeur to those fantastic shores which is almost unknown to the milder months of the year. Beside, the little town has a not wholly cheerless winter life of its own, and is quite able to keep itself warm till summer blinks again on "flowery braes." But, to return to my own experiences. During the first month of my sojourn here, the weather was decidedly shaky. It was a strange mixture. One day a blaze of midsummer sun ; then twenty-four hours of heavy rain, followed by two days of north-east winds and Arctic frost ; and the rest of the week made up of shavings from all the four seasons, boiled down to a kind of shivery jelly, and served up cold. It seemed as if the lavish refulgence of last summer had impoverished this year's supply of heat, and the season of fruits and flowers had to be filled up with the sweepings of Nature's weather warehouse. But, for my own part, I felt content ; for green, historic Ulster was here ; the wild glens, and wilder coast of Antrim were here ; the highlands of Donegal were in full view ; the isles and mountain-tops of Scotland were in sight ; and the waves of the wild ocean, surging up by night and day, within a few yards of my window, seemed to say, with ceaseless voice of solemn sound,—

Take heed, take heed,
We are writing faster than ye can read :
At every pulse of our sire, the deep,
On headland and shore we are laying to sleep
The leaves of a mystical lore.

All these things had inexpressible charms for me ; and let heaven send what weather it pleased, I felt glad to be once more in direct communication with Nature that "never betrays the heart that loves her." And then, it is a pleasant change to leave the din of a crowded city, and find one's-self in the midst of a little community, where one can hear a full and particular account of every cat that kittles in the next street.

But it is now the end of June ; and the weather has "taken up," as we say in Lancashire. Land and sea are smiling beneath cloudless skies, and the earth is flush of fruits and flowers. The air is loaded with song, and sunshine, and sweet smells ; and "night only draws a thin veil o'er the day." Every train brings a fresh swarm of butterflies that love the sea, and the rattle of jaunting-cars is heard from early morn till evening folds up the "green hills of holy Ireland" in her gauzy mantle. The winter "hen parties" are over for a while ; and lodging-house keepers have no time to sit baking their knees at a gloomy fire, and retailing local scandal. The little town is brisk as a bee, from the railway station right through to the wild creek, called "The Wash Pot," at the foot of Ramore Hill. Very soon there will not be a house to be had for love or money. Light-hearted children make the air glad all day with their prattle. Familiar summer faces are wandering about the sunny street again,—cosy fathers and mothers, with their families about them,—and strangers of all sorts and conditions ; Sir this and Sir that, his Grace the Duke of so and so, and the Lord knows who, with a considerable mixture of "the stubble end of the

quality," and a crowd of well-dressed "nobodies," splashed here and there, with a keen-eyed American, who has hurried across the Atlantic to "do Europe in six weeks." It is surprising to see the number of Americans who visit this remote nook of Britain. The inevitable, the inexorable German band is here again, blowing tuneless trumpets to the wearied skies ; and, during the last two days, our friend Punch has had everybody on the grin,—old and young, gentle and simple,—from one end of the town to the other. The aged and the invalid are coming forth from sick chambers now, to inhale renovation from the balm and beauty outside ; and the sun seems to have suddenly brought out also the poor and old from their neglected corners,—mostly staid-looking, life-worn totterers, who prefer open-air starvation to pauper-imprisonment, and who creep timidly about, trying to get "a trifle for a bit of tea, from the quality that visit the shore ;" and now and then, though very rarely in this part of the island, there comes a wandering compound of bad smells and "looped and windowed raggedness," imploring charity with practised whine. I heard of a mendicant of the latter description, asking alms at a house in this neighbourhood the other day, who, on being told to "Be off out o' that, an' go to the poorhouse !" replied, "Bedad, I couldn't go to a poorer house nor this, any way !" I see the same weather-beaten fishers come lounging up from the shore, though there may be many a gap in their ranks since last year, that I know nothing of. The same barefooted women are hawking each day's fish ; and the same blue-painted churns bring the morning's milk. The same old fiddlers, too, are wandering about the streets,

seemingly unchanged, even to their shoe-ties,—one of them playing “Charlie is my darling,” and “The green banks of Clady;” the other playing “The pretty girl milking her cow,” “Granna Waile,” “The twisting of the rope,” “The last rose of summer,” or anything else he is asked for, whether he knows it or not; and when he has finished, walking away, with his blind face upturned to the sky, crooning to himself—

The sweetest divarsion that's under the sun,
Is to sit by the fire till the praties are done.

The post-office is busy now from morning to night, with trinkets, toys, letters, lace, wooden spades, wheelbarrows, shells, and the news of the day; and the waves that lave the smooth beach at the foot of “The Ladies' Bathing Rock” are leaping with delight around the nymphs that crowd that pretty nook of the sea. I meet them sometimes, returning from the shore with glowing eyes, and damp tresses tossing wildly in the sunshine.

It is curious to note how one's personal acquaintance grows in a little place like this, from year to year. I seem to know everybody in the town now. The lads upon the street call to me by name. Poor old Jack Mc.Connell, though eighty-four years of age, treats me to many a strange descant on geology, chemistry, poetry, and traditional lore; and “Dummy,” the cow-boy, never passes without a smile, and a marlock of recognition. These, however, I have known in former years, amongst others never to be forgotten. But amongst the few acquaintances I have formed during this visit, it has been my fortune to fall into friendly communion with a gentleman of rare experience and artistic

power, whose ingenious conversations, and beautiful paintings of this coast, have been a great delight to me. I found him working in cheery solitude ; and I hope his shadow may never grow less till we meet again. And thus, on our way through life, we become unexpectedly linked with scenes and persons by whom the whole course of our existence is affected. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will."





Portrush.

Come unto these yellow sands,
Then, take hands ;
Curt'sied, when you have, and kist,
The wild waves wist.

THE TEMPEST.

HERE am I,—a poor, city-bewildered sinner, and not wholly unconnected with publicans ; here am I, in “The Isle of Saints,” at last,—the “Emerald Gem,” whose brilliance gave light to the western world of antiquity. I sometimes wonder what sort of place it was when it deserved the name of “The Isle of Saints ;” but never mind. It is a delightful country, and I feel as if I could like to stop in it a good deal, and go away from it very little. Oh, Erin ! the green and the bland,—so beautiful and so sad ! What wonder is it that thy warm-hearted children should love their own sea-beaten isle so well ! . . . Here am I,—after the usual travelling experiences,—wandering by the shore of the sea, in search of renovation. And, certainly, if a charming country, rich in the associations of a long and eventful history,—if fresh Atlantic breezes,—if twenty miles of fantastic rocks and headlands, and long stretches of beach, as beautiful as

mottled marble,—if easily accessible solitudes, where berries of the brightest red peep through verdure of the richest green,—if these, with the music of the wild ocean for ever singing in the ear, and with just enough of bathing-place life to give a fillip to the quietness around,—if these can do anything to restore the spirits of a tired citizen, “the heart that is humble,” as the song says, “may hope for it here,—on the coast of Antrim. . . . But I had better say exactly where I am, without any preamble about how I got here. Well, then, my resting-place, after the usual small perils on land and water, is the little bathing-town of Portrush, far away in what southern Irishmen call “The Black North.”

It is an interesting spot to me. I like its remoteness and quietude ; I like the racy flavour of its life during the summer season, for it hibernates in winter ; I like its life,—of which there is as much as a body can handle, and understand, without being swallowed up by it. There are great differences in bathing-places ; and those in which one can bathe in salt water and quietness at the same time, have a great charm for me. The Lancashire people seem to go to Blackpool as much for change of drink as for change of air. They continue their city habits ; they meet the same city faces ; and they devote even more time than usual to billiards and bacchanalian sacrifices with “jolly companions,” who have as much leisure as themselves ; and when they return home a little more scorched by the sun and the saline breeze, and a great deal more inflamed in the vitals, they wonder how it is that they find themselves rather worse than better for the change. The fact is that

Blackpool is just Manchester over again, with a little salt water, a little sand, and a great deal of snobbishness added to it. Blackpool is a salted epitome of Manchester,—with its best clothes and its worst manners on. There is too much of the old hurry-scurry; too much of a weltering swarm of familiar pleasure-seekers, all tumbling over one another in pursuit of happiness, and dragging one another into all sorts of devilment. It is not quiet enough,—not remote enough,—not different enough in tone,—at least for anybody whose nerves need restoration.

In Portrush a man has, at least, a chance of being as quiet as he likes. These northern Irish, too, are a staid, church-going race, endowed with many excellent qualities, as the state of the country shows; and, in spite of their famous whisky, there is less drinking amongst them, in proportion to population, than in Lancashire. Portrush is a little wind-swept town, occupying a rocky nose of land, about five miles north of Coleraine. The wild Atlantic sings to it, night and day; for, in any part of the town, you are not many yards from the sea; and, if either wind or wave be stirring, you can scarcely help both seeing and hearing it,—aye, and feeling it, too, sometimes. It is on the high road to the Giant's Causeway; and, therefore, it sees many strange birds of passage, from all parts of the earth. On each side of the town there is a strand. The "Long Strand," on the north side of the promontory, is a smooth, curving beach, nearly two miles long, ending in great piles of limestone crag, known as "The White Rocks." There is a peculiar sweetness in the song of the surge along this strand. The strand on the other side of the town is

more pent-in by the shore, and less frequented, but, nevertheless, a pleasantly-retired wandering-ground, commanding a fine view of the wild mountains of Donegal. The harbour looks a snug little sea-nest, with its half-dozen craft, rocking idly in the wind. Glasgow steamers call here ; and steamers from the Hebrides ; and, sometimes, strange vessels from strange quarters ; and then, the whole town runs down to see them. There is, almost always, some novel excitement connected with seafaring life going on there ; and the bustle upon the quay is of a quaint character, and easily taken in by the eye. The promontory on which the town is situated, ends in a high ridge of rock, called "Ramore Hill."* This hill is covered with green land ; and it is soft, and dry, and springy to the foot. It is the fashionable promenade ; where the curled darlings of the town air their scented locks in the sea-breeze, "when the clear cold eve's declining ;" and, as Norah meets Shelah on the street, she whispers, "Are you going to the hill this evening ?" This eminence is the best station for watching vessels entering and leaving the harbour, and it commands a fine view of the coast, from wild Inishone up to the bold bluff of Fair Head, in the far north. A few yards from the centre of the town there is an excellent bath-house, almost close to the sea ; and, as we wander by, between eight and nine in the morning, we see a few half-dressed visitors sauntering about, waiting for their baths,—and we hear the old manager shouting to his myrmidons, aloft, "A tepid shower of eighty-five in number one ; and

* Rathmore Hill, the hill of the great fort.

a cold shower in number three! Look alive, please!" Portrush has a little gasworks, the last building of all, before we get into the green country, northward; it seems to hang on the rest, like a drop at the nose-end of the town, on a wintry morning. It has a dozen or so of street lamps, which, like the sea, are very much influenced by the state of the moon. It has also four public pumps, I believe, and three wells. No doubt they will have both more light and more water as the place grows richer, but for the present,—well, neither man nor town "can whistle without top-lip." Portrush has a remarkable post-office,—a little shop with a flower-grown rockery in front. The place is crowded with nick-nacks. There you can get any kind of toys, trinkets, lace, stationery, photographs, physic, fruit, shells, corals, boot-laces, baby-linen, and Bibles,—anything, in fact, from a wheelbarrow to a penny stamp, and change for a shilling; and a pleasant chat, too, if you drop in at the right time, for the quaint spinster who rules that establishment is by far the most interesting presence there. She is the right woman in the right place,—chatty, natty, intelligent, and obliging in the extreme. Yet she can be pungent enough when occasion demands, and is not too long-tempered when people annoy her during the heat of office business. That little post-office may well be a favourite resort of rich and poor. . . . By the way, Portrush is the birthplace of Dr. Adam Clarke; and the little Wesleyan Chapel in which he preached stands at the end of the town, and upon a mound close by it, a stone obelisk, erected to the memory of the great man. A Portrush Sunday has all the subdued tone of a Scottish Sabbath about it. Everybody seems to

have screwed his mouth up for the day ; and hardly a soul dare show himself in the open air without a hymn-book in his hand. There are not even as many dogs on the street as usual. The town is well supplied with places of worship for the number of worshippers. There is an Episcopalian Church, and a Presbyterian Church,—rather handsome buildings for the place—and there is the little whitewashed Wesleyan Chapel ; these three represent what may be called the staple theologies of the north. And then, at the end of the town, there is a pretty Catholic Chapel, with its clergy-house and school-house, all neatly enclosed. And this ends the list of spiritual provision in Portrush. . . . And now, turning from that to the spirituous. There are two large inns, one where the upper ten thousand go,—the lords, bishops, judges, and such-like,—the other, an excellent hotel, cosy and homely, walks on rather shorter stilts than the first, and catches its overflow,—when there is any. The windows of the “first” hotel are a great attraction to passers-by after nightfall, for the full-dressed visitors are then lounging about the great room in statuesque attitudes, whilst the crowd outside gaze upon them with mouths a-gape, as if they were strange animals caged in a menagerie. Of course there are other places of refreshment of less pretensions as these. In fact, each of the two inlets to the town has its favourite “calling-shop.” Folks coming from Coleraine, like to drop in at “The Captain’s ;” and country people, going towards the “Causeway,” have some difficulty in getting out at the town-end without taking “a half-un” at “Ned’s.” The popularity of these places owes a good deal to the

characteristics of those who keep them. It is the same with "Mickey's" whisky-store, down at the sea-ward end of the town, overlooking the harbour. This is the favourite resort of fishermen, and "old salts,"—and fine fellows they are, with their calm, manly faces, which have confronted death and danger so habitually that it seems to have endued their demeanour with a kind of dignified meekness, which is all their own. "Mickey" himself is a great favourite with these wanderers of the wave. He is always ready to befriend a stranded fisher; and they never forget his kindness. This is the place to hear any news of the sea; for there are almost always a few of these ploughmen of the ocean lounging about.

There are certain public features of life here, which must catch the eye of the stranger, they are so peculiar. For instance, the characteristics of people who go about the street, selling things. The fruit trade seems to be principally in the hands of three or four men, who are perpetually stopping you on the public way, with "Dy'e require ony fine plums, the day?" These peripatetic fruiterers seem to be the same persons from year to year, without the slightest change in their appearance. One of them is a surly-looking fellow, who will insist upon you tasting something, which, if you decline, he stands stock-still, and glares as you walk away; as if he was inwardly resolving to have your blood the first opportunity that presented itself. . . . Each morning's fresh fish is dispensed by barefooted fishermen's wives; who generally go in couples, from house to house, asking if you "require ony flat fish, or ony crabs or lobsters, the day?" Eggs

and butter are brought in by clean, timid, farm-lasses, and mild-faced, fresh-looking country women; and milk comes in on carts, in long, blue-painted churns. Now and then a quiet-looking countryman enters the town, leading a load of turf, and looking wistfully from side to side for a customer, as he wends his way slowly along. As for the butchers,—blessing o' their hearts,—they sell good meat; but, beware! for if you send for a chop, they are almost sure to bring you a sheep. . . . There are other features of street life, too, which strike a stranger here. Sometimes a stray piper comes into Portrush, by the "Islay" steamer, from the Hebrides; and away he goes through the town, streaming forth wild pibrochs,—savage and shrill. . . . A German band has been here lately, too, playing,—well, one of the tunes they murdered was, "Now pray we for our country;" and it is well enough for them to *pray* for their country, but,—if they *played* for it as they have been playing here,—they have indeed left their country for their country's good, for such playing would ruin any country on earth! They lingered a long while here, turning up at every turn, in all sorts of places; working away industriously at the same five tunes, and cadging with a persistence worthy of the noblest cause on earth! There is hardly a door at which they have not knocked,—hardly a window up to which they have not thrown solicitous Teutonic leers. And then, the noise they made, it seemed to fill the town to overflowing, with a most excruciating uproar. Portrush could not have held a note more of such brazen discord. The very air seemed ashamed of being a party to that abominable

riot. The blatant janglement murdered every fine sound that was going in the little town, and then floated across the sea, dying out upon the affrighted waves, about half-way over to the Hebridean isles. "Oh, 'twas foul!" Since that German band was here the inhabitants complain that all kinds of fish, endowed with musical taste, have left their shore. But the band is gone at last; and it will be a long time before the town recovers from the throes of agony in which they have left it. These, however, are only stray waifs,—noisy pestilences gliding from place to place, and leaving a trail of pain behind them all the way. But the stock musicians of Portrush, those who are "natives and to the manner born," and who are known as "institutions" upon its streets, may be told upon the fingers of one hand; indeed they principally consist of three,—performers, I suppose I must call them,—two old fiddlers, and a little cracked player upon a crazy dulcimer, whose musical repertory consists chiefly of "Oh, Bob Ridley, oh!" The two fiddlers, also, are quaintly distinct in character. The first,—begging the other's pardon,—is a blind man, a tall, brown-faced, beery old fellow, decently clad in dingy blue cloth, from top to toe; and, like most blind men, he goes with his face turned up to the sky, and with an unconsciously pleading look upon his countenance; yet he is a merry fellow withal. He is occasionally led by his daughter,—a clean, sweet-faced girl, about sixteen. This man has some music in his soul; and when asked for any melody of the "Champagne Charlie" kind, he begins it with a grunt of dissatisfaction,—he hurries through it with careless fingers, and finishes with as short measure as pos-

sible. But there is nothing on earth,—except sixpences,—pleases him better than to be asked to play an old Irish air. Then you see the minstrel in all his glory ; as he sits tuning his instrument, with many a wailing prelude, his blind face beaming with joy, and his limbs quivering with ecstatic thrill ; and as he tones his strings for “Let Erin remember the days of old,” he will turn his face towards you, and, with tears in his eyes, he will say—“Oh, my big son, but that’s a noble tune !” The other fiddler is chiefly noticeable for his helpless age and the general plaintiveness of his condition ; the inarticulate croon with which he accompanies his fiddle, and which is so like a wail of distress ; his long coat, his short trousers, his bowed back, and shrunk shanks, and his three tunes. I have known him several years, and the poor old fellow is struggling still, with one foot in the grave, to wriggle a thin living out of the same three tunes ; and God help him ! say I.

And now, a word about beggars ; and I have done for the present. There is a great deal less mendicancy here than in some parts of Ireland ; but, the other day, an old woman asked alms of me, and when I had relieved her, she burst forth, with all the passionate gratitude of her nature :—“Ah ! see now, darlin’,” said she, “see now what heaven prepares for us an the way ! Oh, thin, your honour, God put that into your heart ! May health an’ good fortin attind ye all your days ! Oh, indeed, sir, I am old, an’ broken, an’ waitin’ my time, which is not long now, glory be to God ! Oh, thin, I am old, an’ ill, an’ broken to the bare bone o’ me entirely ; an’ I am a poor, lone wanderer on the face o’ the ground. Oh, I had seven childer, your honour,

an' a good man to my husband ; but they are all dead,—
 they are all dead, and laid low, long since, your honour ;
 an' I am left wanderin' my lone, with nothin' but poor
 neighbours, an' the kind heart the good God an' the blessed
 queen of heaven makes warm to me on my solitary way !
 May the Lord reward your honour, an' that ye may be blest
 with kind hearts about ye, an' that ye may have lashins an'
 lavins o' the best, to your dying day ! Oh, indeed, indeed,
 I am old an' broken, your honour ! If I was to find death
 comin' on me, I would make for Rasharkin, the place where
 I was born, that I might lay me down to rest among my
 own people,—glory be to God ! Ah, thin,—signs on,—
 there's good fortin forninst ye, darlin' ; and the kind heart
 of her ye love shall attend ye all your days ! Good luck to
 your honour's four bones ! May the hand of the Lord be
 about ye, an' mark ye to grace, for evermore ! ”





Racy Peculiarities.

A man can't be in two places at once,—barrin' he's a burd.

DENNIS GO-SOFTLY.

BEFORE I attempt to describe any part of this coast, I will notice a few peculiarities of speech and manners which have interested me here; and, by way of introduction, I may say that the dialect of Antrim, like the people who dwell there, is more Scottish than Irish, although one sometimes finds it inlaid with genuine Hibernicisms. Whilst moving about here in leisurely fashion, and in all sorts of unpremeditated directions,—chatting with anybody who fell in my way; now with fishermen in the harbour; now amongst the life of the public street; now sauntering with some chance wayfarer along a country road; now lounging by the doors of lowly cots where poor folk nestle; now meandering through the market-place of a little rural town; wherever I have strayed, some fleeting snatch of quaint phraseology has fallen upon my ear,—hot from the heart, and with the clear ring of natural eloquence about it; some fitful burst of earnestness, which has not been pared down to fit the nice narrowness of any exclusive speciality; or I have met with some bit of anecdote, redolent of the life from which it sprang.

In the first place, there is a touch of novelty in, what one may call, the weather salutations, here. Of course, wherever people meet, the commonest topic of conversation, to begin with, is the weather. It is a little neutral ground of talk, upon which the common kindness of our nature can meet without fear of disturbance. In England these weather salutes are as genial as anywhere in the world; but here, in the north of Ireland, it is the form which strikes the stranger's ear with its novel peculiarity. "That's the darlin' weather," says Jemmy Morning, as he trots by in the direction of the Causeway, at the rate of six miles an hour, tugging his head through the wind, and with the upper part of his body aslant, as if he was anxious that his hat should arrive at the place he was going to a few minutes before his trousers. "Varry wunny, the day," says "Tam o' the Aird," as he saunters along the highway, staff in hand, with his one cow at his heels, cropping the herbage upon the borders of the road. "We'll hae a coorse nicht in the channel, the nicht," says an old fisherman, gazing from the head of the "Shepherd's Path," which leads in slippery windings down the face of the precipice into Port Noffer. "Saft mornin', boys," says "Long Dominick," to the guides lounging about the road on the look out for visitors. "Gran' breeze for the stooks," cries Dan of Dulusk, as he peeps over the hedge at a passing acquaintance. "Feighn day *noo*," says Andy McCurdy, whilst the rain is falling in torrents around him—and this is the one phrase he uses in relation to the weather, whatever it may be. "There's rain in the wind, Bush Foot is sounding," says old Robert of the Glenside, as he looks pensively down the vale, to where the sea is breaking in

white foam upon the shore near "Black Rock." And it seems that there is a certain combination of wind and tide which wakens the water into a roar at the point where the Bush empties itself into the ocean, and which is almost a sure indication of rain. "Beautiful morning for the Causeway; will you require a car, sur?" says a Portrush driver, jerking his thumb in the direction of the vehicle.

"The Causeway" is in every mouth in Portrush, either on one account or another; indeed, if it were not for "The Causeway," the majority of the mouths in Portrush could not be kept going at all, unless they went elsewhere. But for "The Causeway," Portrush would probably never have been anything more than an obscure fishing village, and the very life-current of its existence is the stream of visitors which pass through to "The Causeway," from all parts of the world. This marine village,—indeed the whole coast of Antrim,—seems to be thoroughly steeped in two peculiar elements, the wonders of "The Causeway," and the shadowy renown of Fin McCoul, the Irish giant. The first is a constant attraction to strangers, and a source of fitful employment to the whole country-side. And as for Fin McCoul, the common people here not only attribute "The Causeway" itself, but everything else that is extraordinary in nature to that traditionary hero, who fills all the vague dawn of Irish history with a world of misty miracles. Wherever we go,—by mountain, or glen, or sea-worn crag,—we meet with the shade of the giant who used the Round Towers of Ireland as tooth-picks, and who was stepping across the sea to England, with the Isle of Man in his apron, when the string broke, and down went "Mona the

lone," plump into the waves, where it stands now. Wherever we wander upon this coast, we are shown, among its rocks and headlands, Fin McCoul's this and Fin McCoul's that,—his head, his chair, his spy-glass, his well, his kitchen, his loom, his organ, his grandmother, and his grave. Fin McCoul is on every tongue, especially when anything large needs expression. He is more remote and mythical, and he looms larger in the imaginative mind than our own Robin Hood,—the liberty-loving king of England's ancient green woods. If any man here is bigger or stronger than common, the people say he is "as big as Fin McCoul," or he is "as strong as Fin McCoul;" or, if he has a larger nose than his neighbours, he has "a nose like Fin McCoul's." Indeed, all over the country we find the trail of a shadowy renown, to which distance has lent a vast accumulation of imaginary enchantment, and "The Giant" and "The Giant's Causeway" seem to tinge the whole mental air of the district.

And now I will give a few samples of the phraseology of this part of "The Green Isle;" I mean only such flying fits of speech as have accidentally met my ears, whilst roving to and fro, in a lazy way. In the first place I find that the custom of nicknaming people, according to some remarkable feature of body and mind, is almost as common here as it is in Lancashire. For instance, I have met with such names as "Tam Tak,"—for one who thinks it more blessed to receive than to give; "Auld Disobleege,"—for a man remarkable for disinclination to do a good turn; "Holy Andy,"—for an over-righteous man, of Pharisaic mind; "Johnny Peevish,"—for one of plaguey temper; "Billy the

Geck,"—for a man given to mimicry; and "Soon Barney,"—applied to one who is usually in good time for things. . . . The following is a little specimen of a tippling scream between two fishwomen, at the door of a Belfast spirit store:—"Och!" says a stout Amazon, snapping her fingers at a second, who sat upon an empty creel, by the doorway. "Och, that's talk for scutchers! Shut yer gob, darlin', and don't be makin' a holy show o' yersel'! Faith, ye're gettin' too fat an' too full! Ye needna' be stickin' wedges o' beef into yer face, as if ye were postin' letters! It'll be a long time till ye meet with a man that'll tak ye before the clargy! Bad cess to ye, Norah dear! The're ten deevils in some folk, but there's eleeven in you!" "Barney," says a carman to his friend, standing by,—“Barney, how would you like to wed that un?” “Wed her!” cried Barney, switching his whip at the air, “Bi my soul, I'd rather welt her!”

It seems that a common marriage portion of the country maidens in some parts of the north of Ireland, used to be “a bed, and a chest, and a wheel;” indeed, it is still familiarly known in this quarter of the island, as “a County Derry Portion;” and, by the way, I met with an anecdote, lately, relative to marriage portions which is perhaps worth a place here. A country farmer and his wife went to make the preliminary arrangements for the marriage of their son with the daughter of a neighbour, whom the lad had been courting. After a good deal of higgling between the two sets of parents, the lad's father cried,—“Well, noo ; to mak a lang story short,—what'll ye gie wi' the lass?” “Well ; I'll e'en just gie her fifty pun'!” replied the girl's father. “Well, indeed then,” replied the other, “if that's a', she'll

no be ours at the money!" . . . The other day I heard of a young couple who had got married, and, having no house of their own to put their heads in, they were obliged to dwell with the lad's parents until the building was ready, which was preparing for them. In the meantime, children began to make their appearance; and their crying was such an evident annoyance to the old couple, that the young wife was constantly grieved thereat. "Whist, darlin'," said she, to the weeping infant on her breast one day, "Whist, darlin'; ye'll suin be whaur ye can get greetin' your fill, an' naebody to hinder ye." . . . "There goes poor old Molly," said Robert o' the Glenside to me, one day, as he pointed to a tattered crone who was hobbling by. "There goes poor old Molly; she's always *at the edge of her foot*,"—meaning that she was always in a needy condition. In Lancashire they say of a man who is reduced to penury, that he has "etten his cake to th' edge," or, if he has been a luxurious liver, they will say of him that he has "come'd to his cake an' milk at last."

One day, when a knot of Causeway guides were lounging upon the headland above Port-na-Ganye, in lazy chat together, one of them was trying to trace the age of a neighbour, in the following manner:—"I ken the hail lot o' them rightly," said he, "an' this is the way of it,—Alick's the same age as Bill; and Davy's the age of Bill's mother; an' Bill's mother was born the year o' the great water." "Well, indeed," replied the second, "if that be sae she maun be ane o' auld Noah's family." When speaking of a man of no endurance, or of an impatient temper, the people here say that "he comes o' a breed that arena *good tholers*;"

or of a fool they will say, "Och, I ken him, rightly,—an' a well-lookin' man, tee,—but daft, daft, varra daft, fra heed ta heel ! Indeed, indeed, ye might as well ask for holy water in an Orange Lodge, as expect onything sensible frae the crayther. But, what then,—gude guide us,—fools are no the warst kin' o' folk i' the world after a'." The strong flavour of Scotch which pervades the language of the people, here, is very remarkable. I heard a garrulous man alluded to, the other day, as "an auld sluisterin deevil;" and a little while ago, an old Bushmills' shopkeeper was taking the different weights of a small party of young ladies ; and, after he had weighed two or three of more sylph-like proportions, he came, at last, to a magnificent damsel who drew the beam up handsomely at fifteen stone. "By my saul," cried the old man, "but *ye're* no a mountain grazer, ony way !"

During a short stay at a picturesque farmstead in this part, I was very much interested by the racy snatches of humorous speech that fell from one of the maidens of the family, as she flitted to and fro about her household work,—a sweet and sonsie lass, tall and straight, and as lithe as an eel, and brisk as a bee. "Whaurever's that woman gane te?" said she, as she wandered about the outhousing in search of the mistress, "whaurever's that woman gane te? But,—fien' a fears o' her !" continued she, "she'll be no far awa, wi' the sair foot on her. I'll just e'en girn an' bide a wee." "Yees are at it again, weans !" cried she, to a company of youngsters, who were jerking at play, round the peat stack. "A-way to the field, Lizzy, or I'll warm your lug for ye ! An' ye haud away to the horses, Willy ; an' dinna be rinnin' hame, and collougin' wi' your

faither, till he puts bad into your heed,—or ye'll get the waur o't!" "Od', but yon's a quare variety!" said she, gazing after a curious figure which wandered by the gate of the yard,—“yon's a quare variety! Faith, there's mony a strange crater i' the warld, forbye a body's sel'!” “I doot ye've bin treatin' Paddy the day, Jemmy dear,” said she to an old guide, who was returnin' home from the Causeway. “I doot ye've bin treatin' Paddy the day; ye're e'en are like twa burnt holes in a blanket! Oh, man, but ye'll get your hair kempt, when ye win hame!” and when somebody began to tease her about a rejected lover who had crossed the sea, she cried, “Och, a fair wun te his wee boat! There plenty a' guid fish i' the sea, forbye ain! I doot ye're varry funny the day, guid folk; but just hae 't as ye will; things 'll still aye be *some way!*”

As I have said before, the very existence of Portrush depends mainly upon its being the great thoroughfare to the Giant's Causeway; and for one car which leaves Portrush in any other direction, there are a score go to “The Causeway.” The chief reason for this is that from Belfast to Portrush we have the railway; beyond Portrush we have no railway. Still, “The Causeway” is the principal thing that draws travellers to the town of Portrush; and every hour of the day, and in all weathers, two streams of cars pass and repass upon the seven miles of coast road which divide Portrush from “The Causeway.” As we walk about the little town, too, we are constantly meeting with drivers who ask if we “require a car to the Causeway, the day?” These northern drivers lack the sparkling mother-wit of the ancient Irish race, though they

are not deficient of a certain dry, pawky humour, which steals out now and then in a quiet way. There is one of them here who is known as "The Smiler." He is a favourite on account of his easy, obliging disposition ; and, when you have paid for the car, at the end of the journey, he always "laves *the rest* to your honour's generosity ; an' faith, whether it's a sovereign or a crown, it'll *do* me !" And, by the way, an English stranger might be surprised to find that after he has paid for his car, at the rate of sixpence a mile,—which is about the usual charge,—he is liable to a claim from the driver for what is called "whip-money," an elastic sum, the amount of which depends upon the play of the two dispositions of the driver and the traveller. The driver always urges this claim as being apart from his employer's interest, and "all he gets for himself."

And now, in the words used at the Ulster christening feast,—“ Here's you in the shawl, good health ! You against the wall, good health ! Mrs. McFall, good health ! An' ladies an' gentlemen all, good health ! ”





Caves-Droppings.

Thou dost here usurp
The name thou ow'st ; and hast put thyself
Upon this island as a spy.

THE TEMPEST.

QUENE catches many curious things here “wi’ the tail-end o’ the eye,” as they say ; and some of them may be worth mention. The other evening, as I returned from the shore, where I had been sitting in a nook in the rocks, watching the sun go down, I overtook a pilot belonging to this port, and we fell into talk about “things consarnin’ the ocean wide.” He told me many a thing that was interesting ; for he was an old salt, and had “learnt the ropes” early in life. There happened to be several sailing vessels in sight, and he explained to me their differences of rig and their names. He knew every rock and shoal and headland along the shore ; and I found that almost every strand and crag had its traditions of disaster. Speaking of the salmon which abounds in these waters, he said that when the fish return from the sea, each fish knows its native stream, as well as a bird knows its nest, and makes for it as directly. It seems, also, that the fish of one stream differ in shape from the fish of another ; the fish of the Bann, for instance, being broader and thicker than the fish of the Bush,—a difference characteristic of the streams themselves.

And when the fishermen haul in their nets, they can point out the fish of each river, at sight, by their peculiarities of shape. It is curious to note, too, the uncertainties of result in the fishing. Last Friday the fishers at Black Rock caught three hundred and seventy salmon between morning and evening, and since then they have scarcely averaged a dozen a day. This, I understand, is partly owing to changes of wind and tide. The sky was streaked with "mares' tails" as we stood talking together; and, pointing aloft, he explained some of the weather indications of the "cloudland." When the clouds drift like flying hair, they are the fore-runners of wind; and when they hang low and sullen they indicate rain. And not only the "airts" of the wind, but the changing voices of the sea, in different places, have each a special significance; just as they say at the Causeway, "Bush Foot is sounding,—there will be rain!" I found the old pilot a shrewd man in other respects, too, for he said he had noticed that when bread was dear, butter was low in price, because bread was an essential article of food to the poor, and butter they could do without. All this may seem very trite to some people, but to me it was interesting; and it certainly is worth while talking to any sensible man about the things he knows best. In this way men are books to one another, and the whole world a library of living lore.

But, apart from conversations such as I had with the ancient mariner, as one who wanders about in a strange place like this, it seems to quicken the senses, and he catches many a curious eaves-dropping of human speech,—heard by accident, and uttered without premeditation. The other day, as I was passing the door of a whisky-shop, in

front of which two ragged lads, from some large town, stood singing,

The window, the window,—
Oh, she won my heart at the window!

I saw a sight which is uncommon here, though it would not have surprised me in Belfast or Manchester. It was a slim, pot-valiant weakling, who came forth from the whisky-shop, "raunging," as they say in Lancashire, with a lot of boozy acquaintances about him. "Let go my coat!" cried he; "let go my coat, Willy, or ye'll get the redder's lick! They robbed my mother o' her share o' the fish, I tell ye! Let go my coat! I can thump the hail four o' them! There not a man enters the gate o' Portrush this day but I can lick! From twelve stone down'ards,—d'ye hear that, now? Ony son o' man from Coleraine to the Causeway! Here's the fellow can thump the weight o' a horse!" And so on, in maudlin brag, "off a weak stomach," as they say in Lancashire, or "from the teeth out," as they say here. But, soon after this, I met with something of a pleasanter kind. A little after sunset, I was sauntering along a quiet part of the town called Spring-hill. It was a beautiful evening. Midges were whirling in the glowing twilight, and people were sitting at their doors, enjoying the air. In front of a row of whitewashed cottages, a company of bare-footed children were at play; and all was so still around that their voices came distinctly across the street, as they advanced and retired to one another in a kind of dance, singing,—

This is not King William's ground,
Masthoree, oh, masthoree;
We are on Saint Patrick's ground,
Within a golden story.

As I was riding lately through a village of a dozen cottages or so, a few miles from Portrush, I saw a knot of little urchins marching in procession, one with an orange handkerchief fluttering at the end of a pole; the others with sticks and whistles for swords and fifes, and an old tin can for a drum; and every crone in the village was gazing after them with admiring eyes. The 12th of July,—the anniversary of “Boyne Water,”—was drawing near; and there was to be a great Orange demonstration at the village of Portstewart, about two miles from here. The country was all talking about it, and, no doubt, these youngsters had heard all about the matter.

“Doctor,” said a country fellow, stopping a medical friend of mine upon the street, “Doctor, they tell me you’re a well-skilled man.” “Well, sir,” replied the doctor. “Well,” answered the other, “I’ve hed a sair kind o’ stiffness in my neck this lang time gane by,—d’ye think ye’d be able to souple it for me?”

Tam Twinkle, the fisherman, had been listening to the story of an acquaintance of his, who was notable for drawing the long bow; and, when the speaker had finished, Tam replied, “Well, Wully, I dinna say that I misbelieve ye, but if I had told the same story, ye would have said that I was lyin’,—and mind ye, I shouldn’t have doubted your word in the laste.”

I stood at the door, watching the motions of a tattered fellow, who was going about exchanging bits of toffy for rags and bones, and bottles, and other fragments of rubbish. He stopped at the street end, and blew his tin trumpet, and in a few minutes he was surrounded by a swarm of bare-

footed children, some of them with rags in their hands, for exchange. One "wee cutty," however, had nothing ; and, after looking eagerly on for a minute or two, she suddenly whipped off her ragged petticoat, and gave it to the tatterdemalion with the tin trumpet in his hand. He popped the petticoat into his bag, and gave her a piece of spice in return ; and then shifted his ground immediately, for fear of the child's mother.

The elements of nature, here, seem to lend "something rich and strange" to all that is going. Even at church, it is fine to sit, and see the blue waves heaving immediately below the west window, and to hear the moan of the sea mingling with the chants of the church. One Sunday, a swallow flew in at the open door, and, during the remainder of the service time, it flitted incessantly round and round ; sometimes near to the face of the minister. This happens so often there, however, that few people seemed to think anything of it. During the service, too, the prayer for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland came strangely upon ears that had not been used to it.

But, perhaps, you have had enough of these trifling details, for the present ; though I have far from emptied my budget. Indeed, I may say, with that curious humorist, the late Ben Oldfield, of Manchester—

Oh, had I but a poet's pen,
And had I time to spare,
To tell the sights that I have seen
Since last I saw the Square.



The Coast Road.

Still convarsin' an' still discoorsin'
On things consarnin' the ocean wide.

IRISH SONG.

“**P**APA,” said a little blue-eyed fellow, daintily dressed in knickerbocker suit,—“Papa,” said he, looking up at the gentleman who led him into the Portrush Post Office, out of the passing shower—“Papa, does it rain salt water here?”

They entered the shop, and as I stood in the doorway watching the rain, I heard the little fellow twittering, as his eyes fell on the trinkets around him,—twittering in liquid trebles, full of pretty wonderment, like a new-fledged throstle taking its first flight into the woods. In a few minutes the rain was over, and the strong sunshine burst forth again, flushing the moist fields with orient splendour. The bloomy spray, gushing over the garden wall opposite, seemed to thrill with a new delight; and every blade of grass, sprouting amongst the rubbish on the wayside, had “kepped its ain drap” of pearl from the falling shower. I sallied forth down by the manse, and out upon the Coleraine road, not thinking of where I was going.

"That's the darlin' mornin'," said a Portrush driver, who stood waiting for the Belfast train.

"Beautiful!" said I.

"Lovely day for the Causeway," continued he.

"Delightful!" said I.

"Will ye require a car, your honour?" said he, jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

"What's the fare?"

"Fare, is it?" replied he, running to the horse's head.

"Faith, ye know that rightly, your honour. Get on, sur,—if ye plaze,—till I tuck the rug about ye. Sure ye'll take the shore side o' the car? Wait till I dry the sate, your honour. Now, jump up, sur,—if ye plaze,—an' away we go, like one o'clock."

After a little higgling about the fare, we agreed, and I mounted the car. The driver was evidently in great spirits, and, as he gathered up his reins, he began to croon to himself:—

Oh, rise up, Willy Reilly, and come along with me;
I mane for to go with you, and lave this counterie;
I'll lave my father's dwelling-house, his houses, and free land;
And away wint Willy Reilly, and his own dear Cooleen Bawn.

Then jumping up to his seat, he gave the horse a switch, and away went the car, like a bird on wheels. As we whisked round the corner where the little chapel stands, he glanced seaward at "The Ladies' Bathing Rock," where a crowd of fair nymphs were sporting among the waves in the creek, at the foot of the rock, and within sixty yards of the Queen's highway. "Ah, there they are!" said he, pointing with his whip,—“there they are,—the

darlins',—dabblin' their limbs in the say,—forninst the wide world ! Oh, bi my soul, isn't it provokin', now, to see them so contagious,—an' me compelled to lave the sight ! Oh, murder alive !—what'll I do ? . . . Get along out o' that !" cried he, giving the horse another switch. And then, as we shot ahead, he went on singing,—

They fled by hills and mountains, and by yon lonesome plain ;
Through shady groves and valleys, all dangers to refrain ;
But her father followed after, with a bold and armed band ;
And they took poor Willy Reilly, and his own dear Coolen Bawn.

As we swept along Spring Hill, a little bright-eyed fellow, dressed in dingy black, like an ill-paid clerk, beckoned to me from the road side. "Are yees goin' to the Causeway?" said he. "Yes." He then asked if I would be kind enough to allow him "a sate" on the car, "the linth o' Bushmills, in regard o' the lameness in his knee." To which I consented, and I soon found that he was a genuine Milesian, from the south of Ireland, and brimming over with racy chat. He no sooner got settled upon the car than he began to hum a plaintive Irish air; and when I asked him the name of it, he turned round and gave me the history of the tune.

"D'ye like that tune, sir?" said he.

I told him that I did like it.

"Ah, well, indeed, then," continued he, "it's a beautiful air entirely; and mind ye, there's a quare story connected with that same melody. Many's the time I heard it. It's called the 'Dark-haired lady;' an' the way it got the name is this, d'ye see. A long time gone by, a famous fiddler went to play at a nobleman's castle, in County

Mayo ; an', bedad, that same fiddler fell desperately in love wi' the nobleman's daughter, an' she with him, in regard o' the bewitching music he played ; more bi token, he was a handsome fellow entirely. An', faith, the rogue of a fiddler knew it all right well bi the language of the eye, d'ye see ; an' bi the same token, the lady knew it too. So, d'ye mind, the fiddler thought that, as all her grate kinsmen were flutterin' about the place, he would make the fiddle coort the lady, unbeknownst to them all,—barrin' the lady herself, d'ye see. An' right well he knew it was able to do that same, for it was a raal beauty ; an' he was a grate player, all out. An' mind ye, there's not an instrument in the world able to contind wi' the fiddle, in regard o' coortin'. Well, the bowld fiddler made an illigant song right out, all filled wid consumin' radiations of affectionate glory ; for, mind ye, the poor fellow's heart was nigh burstin' wid enchantin' bewilderment. . . . An', oh man alive, but that same love's a tender thing ! Many's the poor crayther lost their rest through it ! It's myself knows that right well ; for I suffered a dale from it, now an' agin, since I was the hoight of a trooper's boot. . . . How-an'-ever, as I was telling ye, the fiddler was a larned man, d'ye see ; but, faith, it's not to tall English he trusted to coort the lady,—och, no,—but he made the fiddle tell the story in a kind o' conversational tune, d'ye see ; an' mind ye, the fiddle was transpoorted with the acquirement of such an occupation ; an' it spoke out the illigant pains that were brakin' the fiddler's heart in such meltin' tones, that, faith, the very strings o' the instrument were nigh burstin' into tears ; an', bedad, there was not one in the

whole coort could stand before the strains came from the fiddle that blessed day ! It began by sayin' as plain as words can spake, ' Oh, what'll I do wi' this heart o' mine ! Oh, darlin', darlin', what'll become o' me ! ' and so the whole coorse o' the story was told bi the music, till it inded in the culmination of a transpoortin' duet. An' that's how the fiddler put the comether an the noble lady. An' at last she caught the beautiful infection to that degree, that she an' the fiddler schaimed to run away with aich other across the water ; an' there they got married to their hearts' contint. Well, worse luck ; the lady's father purshues the pair o' them from place to place, till, at linth, he finds them colloquin' together in the hoight o' domestic enchantment ; an' bad cess to me, but he imprisons the fiddler for nine year, an' brings his daughter home agin,—drowned in tears, from the heart out, for the bowld fellow she was lavin' behind. An' oh, man dear,—wasn't that same fiddler a sad an' solitary soul when the wife of his heart was taken away from him ; an' the fiddle and he moored together many a long year for the darlin' that had won their hearts for evermore. At last the fiddler got relased, d'ye see ; an' he turned out into the world to seek the bird of his heart,—an', faith, by this time the poor fellow was as ragged as a Raghery colt. How-an-ever, he wandered to an' fro with his fiddle through all the coorts o' Europe, playin' the tune that won the heart o' the dark-haired lady,—bi the way she might hear it, wherever she chanced to be. An' so the fiddler wandered, with a sad heart, year after year, sighin' and seekin' among strange crowds for the face he could not find. An' so the days wint on, d'ye see, till at last the lady's father died, an'

she was left in the castle in lonely grandeur, moornin' for the poor fellow that was seekin' her the wide world over. At linth, at the close of one stormy day, he came, faint an' weary, into the coort-yard o' the castle, little dramein' that the darlin' of his heart was nigh; and in a desponding tone he struck up the beautiful tune that won his lost Norah. Well, bedad, who should be sittin' at the windy but the lady herself, sighin' an' thinkin' o' the man she loved above all the world, an' when she heard the music she threw up her arms with a grate cry, an' fainted away, right out o' the face. . . . An' the fiddler an' his lady lived in the castle, in glory an' splendour, enjoyin' connubial transports of affectionate regard to their dying day. An' when they were laid at rest among the lords o' the place, the fiddle hung agin the castle wall for many a long year; an' oft, in the dead o' the night, it was heard playin' a sorrowful lamint,—of its own accoord, mind ye,—for thim that was gone. But bad luck to the note the finest performer in the world could get out o' that same fiddle,—barrin' itself, d'ye see,—after the bowld fiddler an' his lady died."

We had now cleared the last house at the town-end, and were out upon the open road to the Causeway. The landward scene was a pleasant rural tract,—here, yellow stubble; there, pasture; and yonder, green crops, with whitewashed farmhouses scattered about up to the heathery ridge which closes the view. About halfway up the verdant slope, the roofless walls of the ancient church of Ballywillan were in sight, clothed in ivy, and leaning towards their fall,—the sole relic of the old town which once surrounded it. Seaward, a low ridge of grass-grown sand-hills hid us from the sea, and

the beautiful "Long Strand," north of Portrush. The driver, heedless of the tale of my fellow-traveller, was still crooning at his Irish song.

About two miles beyond Portrush, the rise of the road brought us in sight of the open sea, and we had now a fine view of the wild coast in both directions. Looking backward, we saw the tall limestone cliffs called "The White Rocks," worn fantastically by the action of the waves ; and "The Skerries," a low ridge of rocks, here and there "with verdure clad," and making this side of Portrush a kind of natural harbour. The beautiful "Long Strand," too, was partly in sight, stretching away in a curve towards the town behind us. On one part of the smooth beach a large schooner, driven ashore by the storm, lay high and dry, where it had been lying many a month, looking dolefully out of its element. On another part of the beach, the fluke of a rusty anchor stuck up from the sand ; and, here and there, fragments of broken masts and other wreck lay half-embedded, telling silent tales of the dangers of the sea. And from this point of view, Portrush looks very picturesque on its sea-washed promontory. It is a pretty and thriving town now, and brisk enough in summer-time. But I remember old Jack M'Connell telling me, not long ago, what the place was like half a century gone by. "When I first came to Portrush," said he, "more than five-an'-forty years ago, it was just a little rough village, where a few fishers liv't, an' naethin' more. There was just one little steamer,—a Heilan' boat,—came in, an' that was a'. I had sair wark to find a lodgin' there at first. Where the grand ho-tel stands now there was just a little wheen o' thatched cots,

so low that ye could put your hands upon the roofs of them. I mind it well. The first house I went to the windys were a' mendit wi' auld hets, an' raggit trowsers, an' the like o' that; an' the woman that own't it had a black eye,—so I didn't stop there. . . . Butter was sell't just i' the lump then,—not prentit. Whenever they began to prent the butter, it did nae mair good." Such was old Jack's rough glimpse of Portrush sixty years ago.

For the next three miles the road runs near to the edge of the wild clefts of rock, in the bottom of which the sea rages with such violence that sometimes clouds of foam fly over the highway at a height of four hundred feet. There are two or three points at the edge of these cliffs where car-drivers are so accustomed to pull up to give travellers a chance of looking into the chasms below, that horses used to the road stop there of their own accord. One of the gloomy clefts is known by the name of "The Priests' Hole";—and the traditions of the country give a fearful origin to the name,—which brings to mind how oft this fair province of Ulster has been flooded with the red waves of war,—how oft it has been reduced to a blood-stained wilderness, peopled only with terrible remembrances. The stupendous sea-beaten cliffs upon this coast are worn into all sorts of fantastic shapes, and, as we ride along, the driver points them out by name. Here one presents the striking appearance of an enormous lion couchant; and another is shown as "Shelah's Head;" but, perhaps, the most remarkable of them all is the one known by the name of "The Giant's Head,"—an immense seaworn rock, the whole face of which presents a singular

resemblance to a benign human countenance, flushed with humorous expression. The driver pointed to this with especial emphasis. "An' yon rock, your honour," said he, "yon rock's called the 'Giant's Head.' Don't ye see the beautiful face on it?" My fellow-traveller, who had got upon the "well" of the car to get a sight, cried out, "Yes, begorra,—an' there he is, sure enough,—smilin' acrass the waves! Divil a ha'porth he cares for the stormy say! More power t'ye, my bowld fellow!"

The road now leaves the rocky shore a little, and another mile brings us in sight of the ruined towers of Dunluce Castle, mouldering upon the summit of a lofty, sea-worn crag.





Dunluce Castle.

Thou, too, Dunluce, proud throne of feudal state,
Hast bowed beneath the withering stroke of fate.

Wide to the storm now stand thy echoing halls;
Time saps the base of thy basaltic walls;
In ruin lies thy bridge's narrow pass,
Sunk is the fosse, and clothed with waving grass;
The sea-pink blooms upon thy turret's height,
Where the lone bird of ocean broods by night;
While far beneath the sea-washed cavern moans,
As the sad spirit of the whirlwind groans,
And fell Banshees, across the lonely heath,
Shriek to the blast the fearful song of death.

DR. DRUMMOND.

I HAVE taken the reader from the town of Port-rush, along the edge of the sea, as far as Dunluce Castle. The other day, I saw the place again, and I find that it grows upon the imagination. It reminds one of the stronghold of some ancient robber. It looks like the scene of a thousand traditions, trailing down from the misty past. Strange things must have happened in that savage spot since it was first inhabited by the old chieftains of Ulster. I think I never saw such a wild pile of ruin on such a wild perch before. Lord John Manners says,

“Dunluce is, without exception, the grandest, romanticest, awfulest sea-king's castle in broad Europe. There is no castle on the Rhine, or the Loire, or the Seine, or anywhere else that I know of, that can be compared with it for desolate, awe-inspiring grandeur.” Well, this is saying a good deal certainly ; but then, it may be true, for anything I know. It has not been my fortune to see the “castled crags” of other lands. To tell the truth, I, like most men, have not seen all my native land yet, and, therefore, I cannot make world-sweeping comparisons about the matter. “Dear-bought and far-fetched is good for ladies ;” and we are all a little inclined to think that what we have never seen, and is difficult to get at, must be finer than that which is everlastingly under the nose. Well, let the reader beware, then, and keep in mind the limited range of my experience ; and, in the meantime, I will tell him something of what Dunluce looked like to me.

The glow of sunset was flushing the headlands of Antrim with splendour as a rise in the road brought me in sight of the ragged towers of Dunluce, mouldering upon the summit of a gloomy crag,—like the bleached bones of a dead eagle. Its position is strikingly wild, and partly proves its antiquity. It shows that the site must have been chosen in days of the iron hand, when life and property were at the mercy of the strongest robber, and personal security was of more importance than personal comfort. We need not ask what became of the poor and weak in those days. History leaks out something of their sad story amongst its records of kings, and priests, and nobles, but it cannot tell the whole tale. High perched upon a dark basaltic rock, over-frowning the

tempestuous sea, the relics of Dunluce stand, in ruinous desolation,—partly isolated by the waves, and partly by a deep chasm,—connected with the mainland by a narrow bridge of masonry, eighteen inches wide, and wholly unprotected at the sides. The summit of the rock is crowned with the ruins to its utmost edge, and more than one writer says he wonders how these outer walls were built. “What numbers of masons and builders must have fallen into that gloomy sea before the last loophole was pierced.” Indeed part of the castle has fallen away, with the rock beneath it, down into the wave. The base of the crag is perforated by a lofty cave, in which the sea roars underneath the shattered stronghold; and the mouldering relics that crest the steep are sometimes drenched in storm-driven spray, although the rock itself is more than one hundred feet high. As the sea-bird wheels and screams around the desolate ruin, his cry is unmingled with any other sound but the moan of the sea, and the wind wailing in the rifted towers. Kind Nature is taking the solitary fastness of Ulster’s ancient chieftains into her arms again. Time has mantled its hoary walls with mellow tinges of decay. Its silent courts are rank with weeds, and wild flowers spring between the separating stones, like daisies growing from the graves of the dead. The grip of ruin is upon the storm-beaten “mansion of the chaste and gentle melodies.” Its hearths are cold, and tall grass waves in the courts that once were thronged with smooth-clad nobles and ladies bright. The wild music of birds and winds, and the voices of the elements alone are heard within the roofless walls which once rang with the minstrel’s song. Naked to the skies it stands in tattered desolation, and the cold

streams of heaven sap its tenantless halls. The moan of the sea wanders through it, and finds no life ; and the wilderness of waves deepens the loneliness around. Dunluce is, indeed, a savage looking piece of solitude. Tradition ascribes its origin to a chieftain called M'Keown, who built it for protection against the Danes and the ancient Caledonians, as well as his own turbulent neighbours. Little, however, is known of its early history. But, whoever its founder may have been, it afterwards fell into the hands of the M'Quillans,—whoever they might be,—and lastly, of the O'Donnells, famous Ulster chieftains, and sub-kings to the great O'Neil. This is really a kind of bare scaffolding of its history ; the imaginative reader may fill it up with revelry, robbery, chivalry, treachery, heroism, “battle, murder, and sudden death,” and the usual details, according to his own fancy. In 1584, it was besieged and taken by Sir John Perrot, who planted his artillery (two culverins and two sakers) against it. This ordnance was brought by sea from Dublin to Portrush, and thence “was drawn by men's hands through want of other means.” A stout defence seems to have been maintained for a while, till at last the deputy (Sir John Perrot) “seeing the soldiers shrink, commanded some of his own servants to supply the places of them that were fearful to fill the gabions, and make good the ground, himself encouraging both them and the rest, by giving not only his presence but his hand to the work, by which means the ordnance was planted and the blinders set up ; the canoniere beginning to play, which at first did little annoy the castle, or the ward therein, but within a little time the pile began to shake, through continuance and the

discharging at once of the artillery. Then the courages of the ward began to quail, insomuch as, the next morning, a parley is demanded, and conditions propounded ; leave to depart with bag and baggage is by the deputy granted, as well to take time while the feare lasted, to prevent such resolution, as despaire, and a better consideration of the strength of the place might yield them, as to save the charge of re-edifying the castle, which he intended keeping for the Queene, being a place of no small importance." Dunluce must have had a troubled time of it during the two centuries which followed that siege. It is said to be haunted still by a banshee, called "Mave Roe." A room in one of the towers is pointed out as "Mave Roe's Room," and she is said to sweep its floor every night. Indeed, it always looks so wonderfully clean as to lead to the supposition that some less supernatural broom than Mave Roe's assists the legend. Local writers are never tired of Dunluce. In ^a humorous poem I met with lately, I find the following lines :

There ould Dunluce is, which no other use is
 But for people to write their names inside ;
 And a room that's round, O ! an' quite renowned, O !
 It's Mave Roe's room—and it's six feet wide ;
 It's there McQuillian slew foes by the million,
 With no double-dalin', but pike an' lance ;
 An' like a bould Dalmatian, or a Polynasian,
 Gave 'em an illigant rayson to look two ways at wance.

And as the same writer says of Coleraine, so might he say,
 with equal truth, of Dunluce—

It's ould an' it's anshint, an' faith it's mintioned
 In books was printed before the flood ;
 Likewise the "four masters" tells its bould disasters,
 How, like a ragin' lion, it thim withstood.

About five hundred yards north-east of the castle, and hidden from it by a rise of ground between, a little vale stretches away from the roadside,—a quiet vale of cultivated land and hedge-rows,—silent pastures, and green growth everywhere, but in one spot, where the roofless walls of an old church lean hither and thither, in moss-grown decrepitude, in the midst of a weedy graveyard. There is no other vestige of any kind of building in that rural vale. The wild birds, the winds, and the sun, and rains of heaven have it all to themselves. All around the ruined church there is nothing but green pastures and ploughed lands. And yet, even so late as the year 1641, that green valley was occupied by the market town of Dunluce, the old town of the Earls of Antrim. Now there is not one stone left upon another to mark where the habitation of man has been ; nothing to indicate to a stranger's eye that busy streets have lined that valley of green crops,—nothing save the ruined church, which makes the passenger wonder, as he looks around, why it was ever planted in such solitude. The yellow corn waves now where chimneys smoked, and young and old gathered around glowing hearths. And cattle graze upon the ground where buyers and sellers chattered and tossed the "God's penny" from hand to hand in the Saturday's market,—for the town had a weekly market on that day. No human voice is heard in that valley now but the prattle of girls weeding in the turnip fields, or the cry of the plough man to his horses, or the crack of a driver's whip, as some car rattles by at the end of the valley, on its road to the Causeway,—no sound but the wild music of birds and winds and the voices of the stormy elements. Upon the south-

east slope of the knoll which hides the castle from the valley,—where the land has not yet been ploughed,—the ground heaves, here and there, in regular square ridges, showing where the foundations of houses are overgrown with green,—and this is all that is left of the old town of Dunluce. The little stream that runs by the ruined church has been reddened with blood, and its waters have rippled in the glare of midnight conflagration. The stream is singing on, in limpid beauty ; and the wild flowers nod upon its banks, and kiss its liquid lips to-day, as if such things had never been. It seems strange that a whole town should have been so utterly swept from the face of the earth within such a short lapse of time ; yet it is so. Indeed, the numerous instances in Ireland of ruined churches standing, like this, in the midst of solitudes once occupied by towns and villages, are sad comments upon the history of this turbulent land. In 1641, Dunluce was completely razed to the ground. This was the time when the Irish rebellion broke out in Ulster, under the leadership of Sir Phelim Roe O'Neil.

On that hapless generation, Catholic and Protestant, then came the culminating horrors of a bloody struggle which had continued, almost without interruption, for the space of five hundred years. The massacres throughout Ulster in 1641 naturally resulted from the "Plantation of Ulster," in 1606, by which multitudes of the Irish were driven from their lands, and only permitted to live on sufferance in the bogs and among the mountain fastnesses of their native soil. But the "Plantation of Ulster" was, in its turn, the natural result of the frightful condition to which the whole province had been reduced by the rebellion of the northern chieftains, O'Neil and O'Donnell, who made it literally a howling wilderness, and they suddenly deserted it for a more peaceful home in Spain.

From a very interesting work, called "The Stewarts of Ballintoy," by the Rev. George Hill, I quote the preceding passage, as also this :—

The Irish burned the town of Dunluce, which then (in 1641) stood on the other side of the road, opposite Dunluce Castle; but they could not seize the castle, which was defended by a small garrison. The town of Dunluce must have been of some importance, containing its merchants, most of whom, no doubt, were Scottish settlers, in the days of the first Earl of Antrim. In the churchyard of Dunluce there is a tombstone which was erected by a "burgess of Irvine" (in Scotland) over the graves of his children. The inscription is as follows: "Here lyeth the children of Walter Kyd, marchant of Dunluce, burgess of Irvine. He made this stone tenth of March, anno domini, 1630."

I remember copying this very inscription into my note book some years ago. About eleven years after the date of this tombstone, the rebellion swept across Ulster, with all its horrors, and Dunluce, with its hiring fairs and its weekly market, disappeared from the scene.

And now to return to the castle. The traveller who wishes to see the old fortress from the best point of view should look back upon it from the rising ground, about one hundred yards beyond it, on the road to the Giant's Causeway. He will then see Dunluce in all its wildness. From thence the ruins are completely under the eye; and the crag upon which they rest is visible almost to the foot, where the waves break upon it. He will do better still if he leaves the car for a little while and views the castle from the edge of the dividing chasm; or descends into the hollow, to look aloft at the ruined-crested cliff, and examine the sea-cave which perforates its base. About half a mile beyond

the castle, part of a round-topped eminence has been cut away at the side, to make room for the "coast road," which here once more runs close to the edge of a wild creek of the sea. It is worth while to pull up and look over the wall, into that precipitous cleft, at the bottom of which the sea is raging among fantastic rocks. The slow action of the waves during countless ages of time has rounded off every jagged point from these iron crags. The hill which has been cut away on the seaward side, for the road, is known as the Gallows Hill, a name which sufficiently indicates its use in former times. One feature of feudal tenure in the olden time was that the great chieftains, holding lands under the king, had power of life and death within their territory, among other sovereign rights, which now appertain to government alone. The Gallows Hill is in full view from the castle; and, no doubt, many a man has taken his last look at sea and land from the summit of that lonely hill.

But now the road begins to descend. The ruined towers of Dunluce have disappeared; and, as we rattle by the quarried side of the hill of death, a new scene opens upon the sight, of which I will say something in my next.





Dunluce to the Giant's Causeway.

Come to these capes that brave the northern gale,
And bid the wide blue heaving ocean hail !
Come hear, with me, the big tumultuous waves,
Bursting like thunder through a thousand caves,
And see the bark, which blackening tempests urge,
Ride o'er the hills of foam, and cleave the boisterous surge.

DR. DRUMMOND.

THE ruins of Dunluce have now disappeared behind us on our road to the Giant's Causeway ; and, as we pass "Knock-an-chick," or "The Hill of Death," a new scene opens upon the sight. Before us lies a fine sweep of the shore, about three miles in extent, full of creeks, and little bays, and rocky fantasies, upon which the sea has been at work for millions of years. It seems strange that yon water-rounded crag, half-hidden by the laving waves, must have looked just as it does now when Pharaoh's daughter found Moses among the bulrushes of the Nile,—but it is so. The irregular semi-circle of shore which is now before us lies low for about two miles, then gradually rises, wilder and loftier, up to the headlands of the Giant's Causeway, which shut out the coast beyond.

The first object which catches the eye, along the shore, is the fishing village of Ballintray. From the distance, it

looks a sweet little scatterment of white cottages ; in fact, it is so, when you are in it. The whitewash of its houses is indeed white, for the breezes of the Atlantic bring no smoke, and the rain that falls is clean rain. The rain we get in Manchester has to filter its way through a canopy of soot, that makes it mud when it comes to the ground. Ballintray seems "well off" in a small way ; it is clean and orderly ; the roads are good ; the houses are regular, and comfortably built ; and the whole place has a modern aspect. There are no picturesque huts in it, with ricketty walls, and ground for the floor, and wild-flowers growing on the thatch. It seems bald of those quaint features which belong to villages of ancient settlement. But, somehow, the abodes of the poorest of the poor in this land do not look so miserable as the dwellings of the same class of people in a great city. The lowliest shed here, with its smoke-blackened rafters, and its turf fire upon the hearth, has a certain sweetness and prettiness about it. It lies in the lap of nature ; and its poverty is the poverty of a bird's nest. Sun, moon, and stars, the winds, and the rains of heaven, seem to dally with it in a kindly way, and it partakes of the charms of the landscape around. The greenness of the scene creeps over it with beautifying caress ; and the many-mooded weather mantles its humble walls with tones of tender colour. And as it grows older, the stormy elements seem to visit its decrepitude with kindlier touch from day to day, till it sinks sleepily into the scene, and becomes absorbed in the all-pervading beauty "whose world-wide empire never wanes." No wonder that the heart of man should cling to such homes as these, steeped as they are in the witchery of

nature. But when the mind turns from these "huts where poor men lie" to the back slums and cellar dwellings of Manchester and Liverpool, the contrast is appalling. In those feverish dens the air is thick with misery, and death has no rest from his labours. Here the poor live long, and are comparatively happy, for they live simply; and nature laps their lowly estate in sweet influences. There

Dangers stand thick upon the ground,
To drag us to the tomb.

One thing that Ballintrae lacks to make it look picturesque is sylvan greenery. There is not a tree in it, nor about it. Even a little ivy, trailing here and there, would relieve the glare of its white walls, and beautify the general appearance of the place. The life of the village is of a very quiet kind, and the inhabitants seem steeped in the dreamy sadness of the sea. Their talk is chiefly of the fishing, the crops, and the ocean; with smatterings of news from the world in the distance. In summer, a few visitors relieve the scene with a little freakish change; but, during the rest of the year, there is no flutter in its life, except such as the elements awake; and when the sea is calm, the voices of children at play upon the shore come up the cliffs, like the sound of "ducks wheetlin' amang meat." The little bay is so shut in that scarcely anything of the coast can be seen from it. It looks right out to sea, and every passing vessel is an object of interest. There is almost always something in sight upon the watery highway,—great steamers plying between Glasgow and Londonderry; Sligo boats; the Islay steamer, from Glasgow to Portrush, and

then through the Hebrides, and back the same way; Canadian steamers, on their way to Lough Foyle, or homeward bound across the Atlantic; strange sails, looming dim in the offing, and small craft skimming by the mouth of the bay; and, now and then, a collier comes into the port, from Scotland; or a man-of-war goes ploughing by, with the union jack fluttering in the wind. Ballintray is a coast guard station, too,—with half a dozen men or so,—and even this seems to give a touch of importance to this little marine nest, and as the men pace the shore in their breezy man-o'-war garb, they seem to be always keeping a watchful eye upon the sea, as if a French fleet was expected on that part of the coast every hour. I like to chat with these coast guardsmen. The chief boatman is an experienced old man-o'-war's man; and the men pay him as much deference as if he were an admiral. He lets me look through his glass at the passing vessels; and he shows me his cottage, and his garden, and the arms of the station, all sharp and bright, and ready for action.

On the north-east side of the bay there is a modern mansion, surrounded by a wide space of green but treeless land. It is a large yellow-washed building, of no particular style of architecture that I can describe. The shore folk call it "The Castle." There is a little anecdote connected with this house that shows something of the nature of the tides on the coast. In the summer of 1868, "The Castle" was tenanted by an English nobleman, and, during that time, his lordship's butler and valet took a boat from Ballintray, with the intent of visiting the Giant's Causeway,—which is about two miles off. But,

being inexperienced boatmen, they were carried away by the tide, far eastward, into the dangerous channel called Slunk-na-marra, which divides the isle of Rathlin from Ballycastle, where they were picked up, and their boat taken in tow by a collier, on its way to Londonderry. The collier brought them back till they were once more opposite to Ballintray, from whence they set out; they insisted upon taking to the boat again, feeling confident of their ability to reach the shore, which was less than a mile off. The captain of the collier having given them sufficient warning, they took to their boat, and the two vessels parted company. Away went the collier towards Derry, but the unfortunate boatmen, after struggling hard to reach their home, which was full in sight before them, were once more carried far away to sea, by a tide running to the northward, and were ultimately picked up, in a terrible state of exhaustion, by a Canadian vessel, homeward-bound, and were taken forward by it to Montreal, in Canada. In the meantime, week after week went by, and no tidings came of either the boat or the men. The country-side gave them up as lost, and their friends mourned them as dead. The nobleman paid for the boat, and left the place, for still week after week went by, and nothing could be heard of his two servants. After some time, however, the wanderers returned, and the butler found his wife and family clad in mourning weeds. Such was the story that went the round of the papers at the time,—such, indeed, was the fact, for I was living within two miles of Ballintray when the thing befel.

I will now return to the high road, which leaves the coast

a little near this point. As we pass "Knock-an-chick," the Gallows Hill of Dunluce, the landward scene is interesting. About three miles distant, the dark headlands of the Causeway shut out of sight the coast beyond. A little nearer, Coleman's Hotel occupies the head of a green slope commanding a fine view of sea and shore for thirty miles. About a mile from the hotel, Dundarave, the seat of Sir Edmund M'Naughton, stands upon a rich upland, surrounded by woods and lawny lands; and in the far south-east the round top of Knocklade overlooks all the intervening landscape. At the foot of the Dundarave grounds the town of Bushmill nestles upon the banks of the stream from which it takes its name. It is a clean little town, consisting almost entirely of one street of white-washed houses and shops; it has two inns, and several smaller places where whisky is sold; it has an enclosed market-place, with a public clock; a court-house; one large distillery; two flax mills, upon the Bush,—from which it gets the name of Bushmills,—and it has the usual places of worship, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Wesleyan. Bushmills is chiefly notable for whisky, salmon, and Orangemen. The "Bushmills dew" is celebrated; and, of course, it is an affront to ask in Bushmills for the whisky of any other distillery. The river Bush has a peaty hue, but is full of picturesque windings and pretty falls; and, for its length and volume, is an excellent salmon stream. All the world knows that Antrim is an Orange land. There are several Orange lodges in Bushmills; and on the 12th of July the town is as gay as a Lancashire rushbearing, with ribbons, and banners, and Orange lilies, and holiday folk

from all the country round. There are freemasons in Bushmills, too. Some years ago I fell in with an interesting old mason here. In his youth he had seen a good deal of the world afar off, and he was a man of more than ordinary intelligence and information, with a genial disposition, and a rich vein of humour. Many a time I have listened to his snatches of song and story. I remember one of his songs in which the children of a brother of the mystic tie are described as going about the house, clapping their hands, and singing, "My daddy's a freemason, an' we needna fear the deil."

Bushmills is about two miles from the Giant's Causeway ; and in summer time, "Causeway guides" may be met with, in straggling detachments, along the road, lying in wait for visitors, like skirmishers thrown out by a hostile army. These guides are generally stout, active fellows, and good boatmen. They are not remarkable for ready wit, but they possess a certain kind of slow, sly humour, more characteristic of the Scotch than the native Irish ; and their geological discourses are very amusing. "Do you intend this lad of yours to be a guide?" said I to a poor woman one day. "Och, no, dear," replied she, "Och, no ; that's the last thing of a' ! The life o' a guide is a scattered thing. Puir fellows, they hae nae certainty ava ! In summer it's a' chops, an' steaks, an' mutton, an' tay, an' whisky ; an' when winter comes, they're just as bare's as the snow i' the dyke,—sleepin', an' shiverin', an' starvin', till the time gaes roun'. Och, no ; guid send my poor bairn readier meat than a runnin' hare !"

And now we have ridden through Bushmills, and up the

long slope which is so finely shaded by the trees of Dundarave woods; we have passed "The Fingers," where another road branches off towards Ballycastle; and we are down in the hollow, within half-a-mile of "The Giant's Causeway;" but before we visit that far-famed scene, let us turn aside on the left hand road for a short distance, and take a peep at a nook of the shore, called Black Rock.

Black Rock is the name of a little bay, between Ballin-tray and the Causeway. There is a strand at Black Rock,— "Bosca's magic strand," upon which many a good ship has gone to wreck. Not long ago, a steamer called the "Arbutus" ran aground there, and was left high and dry by the retiring tide. At one end of the strand the Bush empties its waters into the sea; and in fine weather people come from the neighbouring village and sit upon the bank, watching the salmon ascend the stream. At the other end of the strand, and partly in the sea, there is a dark cluster of jagged rocks,—hence the name, Black Rock,—and in stormy weather, the sea drenches this sombre mass in foam and spray. In a nook of these sea-beaten rocks there is a low, stone-built hut, where the salmon-fishers dwell during the fishing season. They dry their nets upon the neighbouring bank, and their boats are sheltered in a little creek hard by. A few years ago, the fishery there was managed by a Scotchman, of the name of Knox, who dwelt alone in the hut at Black Rock. At last, he was drowned, in the bay. The first night after the body was found, and while it lay in the lonely hut, awaiting burial, robbers crept in at the window, and stepping over the dead man's body, which lay beneath it, they set fire to part of his bed-straw, and by its light they

stript the place of everything worth carrying away. This anecdote, which I had heard often before, was told to me again by the fishers at Black Rock, as we sat together one stormy night in the hut, where the thing took place. About five hundred yards from the fishing hut, a little "burn" comes wimpling down, between banks of wild flowers ; and near the spot where its waters join the sea, the roofless walls of an old corn mill, and the ruins of a little cottage, stand in neighbourly decay, low down in a green crevice, close to the stream. In that ruined cottage, whose smoke-blackened rafters are now open to the skies, there once dwelt old Dan Graham, a fisherman, with his wife, and four grown-up sons. One stormy night, about five years ago, the four sons were returning homeward from sea, when the boat was capsized in Black Rock Bay, and they were all drowned, within sight of their own hearth-light. They were so near their home, in fact, that the old man hailed them almost from his own door, and was answered by them as they struggled among the waves. They were all drowned ; and there was wild sorrow in the fisherman's hut that night. I remember calling at the cottage a few days after that melancholy event. The aged mother sat by the turf fire, with her head bound up in a cloth, and swaying herself to and fro, in speechless sorrow. The voice of the hungry sea had an awful sound in that silent cottage, which was hung round with fishing tackle which would know its owners no more. The old fisherman survived his sons about two years ; but, as the shore folk say, "he was never the same man," and he used to sit for hours together upon the bank, gazing upon the spot where his sons were drowned. His

widow is still living, "a poor lonesome pilgrim," as she said to me the other day, wandering about the causeway, selling "specimens" to visitors. Such are the stories one meets with in every nook of the sea shore.

Our hint of woe
Is common: every day some sailor's wife,
The masters of some merchant, and the merchant
Have just our theme of woe.

And now, in the words of old M'Salmon, the fisherman,
"Here's

Life to man, and death to fish;
The boat, the creel, the plough;
Horn, corn, lint, and ling,
Flax, an' tarry woo;
An' bad luck to them that hasna' the heart to like folk.





The Giant's Causeway.

Dark, o'er the foam-white waves,
The giant's pier the war of tempests braves,
A far-projecting, firm basaltic way
Of clustering columns, wedged in dense array,
With skill so like, yet so surpassing art,
With such design, so just in every part,
That reason pauses, doubtful if it stand
The work of mortal or immortal hand.

DR. DRUMMOND.

BEFORE entering upon this famous spot, let me warn the traveller who comes here with a mind full of extravagant conceptions, that though the grand headlands and general appearance of the scene cannot fail to strike him with wonder and admiration, his first glance at "The Giant's Causeway" will probably be disappointing; for his imagination may have raised for him, beforehand, a structure of a different kind, and one that takes the eye by storm, at once, which "The Giant's Causeway" does not. The tourist who is hurrying from place to place, "doing" pet bits of the country, as fast as he can,—the man whose mind is but "the mind of his own eyes,"—may not see much in it,—he will not see much in anything; but the true lover of nature, the man of taste and culture,

who has leisure at will, ought to linger here. This is, indeed, a place to linger in, before the mind can grasp its many points of interest, and I know few places that grow so much upon the imagination by long acquaintance. There is something weirdly-wonderful about the "Causeway" as a natural object, even to a scientific mind; but it is the Causeway "system," of which the Causeway itself is only a small,—though certainly the most curious,—part; it is the general grandeur; the fantastic variety; and the historic associations of "Dalriada's wild romantic shore," that makes this such an interesting region. The whole coast of Antrim abounds in wonderful variety:—

Rocks that in clouds grotesque their summits hide,
Gigantic pyramids, embattled steeps,
Bastions and temples nodding o'er the deeps,
Aerial bridges o'er vast fissures thrown,
Triumphal arches, gods of living stone,
Æolian antres, thunder-lifted spires,
And all the wonders of volcanic fires.

At the hotel, the traveller is less than half a mile from the "Giant's Causeway." About fifty yards beyond the back of the house, he finds himself on the edge of a cliff, overlooking "Port-na-Baw," or "The Cow Port,"—a wild scene, about which the steep headland sweeps, in a fine, irregular semi-circle. At the farther end, two lofty piles of ragged rock, called "The Stookens," jut into the sea, hiding from view the "Giant's Causeway," which is about a quarter of a mile beyond. Near the foot of the cliff, too, upon which the hotel stands, there are two singular slices of rock, or "trap dykes," almost isolated by the waves. From this corner of

the port the boats start to visit those parts of the scene which can only be approached by water,—“The Giant’s Amphitheatre,” of which Kohl says “it is certainly the most beautiful amphitheatre in the world, that in Rome not excepted ;” and further, “it is a scene in speaking of which no traveller need fear indulging in terms of exaggeration, for all that he can say must remain far behind the truth,” and next, “Pleaskin,” “The Dry Head,” of which the same writer says, “it is the finest of all the promontories, as the Giant’s Amphitheatre is of the bays. It rises to an altitude of 370 feet, and in the grand basaltic colonnades, and different stratifications of which it is composed, sublimity and beauty are blended together in an extraordinary manner. The cliff appears as if it had been painted, for effect, in various shades of green, vermillion rock, red ochre, grey lichens, &c.,—its general form so beautiful,—its storeyed pillars, tier after tier, so architecturally graceful,—its curious and varied stratifications supporting the columnar ranges ; here the dark brown amorphous basalt, there the red ochre,—and below that again the slender but distinct lines of wood coal,—all the edges of its different stratifications tastefully varied, by the hand of vegetable nature, with grasses, ferns, and rock plants.” This passage from Kohl is an admirable description of “Pleaskin” in detail, and general effect. I have seen it by twilight, in autumn, when there was unearthly beauty about its marvellous lines :—

Row above row, with grandeur joined to grace,
Rise its grey columns o’er their vermeil base ;
A solemn majesty around it spread,
And with cerulean æther crowned its head.—
Most beauteous steep that shades the ocean tide.

The last, but not least, interesting places visited by water are the sea-caves,—“Port Coon Cave,” “Dunkerry Cave,” and the “Pigeon Cave,”—all within half a mile of the starting place, in “Port-na-Baw.” There is an impressive grandeur about the appearance of these lofty, Gothic arched caves, floored by the heaving sea. There is a legend that Port Coon Cave was inhabited by a hermit giant, who was fed by seals. The roof of Dunkerry Cave is sixty feet above high water mark,—it abounds in marine plants, and the roof and sides are clad in green confervæ, which give a rich and beautiful effect, softening the general solemnity of the scene.

Above the flood its dome high-arching bends ;
A crimson zone its emerald walls surrounds,
Far, far within the hollow surge resounds :
Borne through the cliff's contracting sides we hear
Its echoes roll, where skiff ne'er dared to steer.

These characteristics belong, more or less, to all the caves on this coast. The whole country, as well as the coast, abounds in caves; indeed, Dr. Drummond derives the name Antrim from *tir an uiam*, or the land of caves. The slopes of “Port-na-Baw” are all green land, but the shore is lined with dark wave-worn boulders, and masses of seaweed, gathered for the making of kelp, or mineral alkali. From the edge of the cliff, near the hotel, a good road winds down through this port, under the shade of the headlands, to the point where the wild pile called “The Stookens” runs into the sea, as if in defiance of the Atlantic's rage; and there, as the traveller rounds the point between “The Stookens” and the headlands, “Port-na-Ganye,” or, “Sandy Port,” is all before him. The sweep of this semi-

circle is grander than that of "Port-na-Baw," and the headlands rise to a nobler altitude,—and there, at the opposite point of the port, a dark, low mass of curious honeycombed-looking rock, runs far out into the waves. That is "THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY."

And now, about this far-famed speciality of nature's mystic skill. As one treads from column to column upon that dark mass of many-sectioned pavement, strange speculations crowd the mind as to the manner of its origin, and the vast cycles of time which must have elapsed since those basaltic rocks took their present form, in some wild throe of nature, in her old, primeval time. And, as we gaze upon the clustering columns, wedged in dense array,—

The reason pauses, doubtful if it stand
The work of mortal or immortal hand.

When the eye has wandered from the sea, breaking along the romantic coast, to where, "in circuits vast, the pillared shores expand," it settles again, at last, upon this strange mole, in a maze of wonderment at the seeming design, the close-fitting workmanship, so just in every part, of this great bed of upright columns,—

Which black, and firm, its adamantine sides
Lifts o'er the azure of the heaving tides.

This extraordinary work of nature was almost unknown to the general world till near the end of the seventeenth century, since when it has been annually visited by an increasing stream of tourists, from all parts of the earth ; and amongst them, of course, the foremost scientific men of all nations. It is hard to describe "The Giant's Cause-

way," so as to awaken a true conception of its singular appearance. It consists of three moles, running, side by side, into the sea; and the same formation is supposed to continue far away under the waves, even to the Isle of Staffa, in the Hebrides, where it makes its appearance again, at the celebrated "Fingal's Cave." The Causeway is composed of perpendicular columns, some five, some six-sided; there are but three of nine sides; there is only one triangular pillar; and the total number of four and eight sides bear but a small proportion to the entire mass, of which it may be said that ninety-nine out of a hundred have either five, six, or seven sides. The ends of these upright columns form the Causeway; and though the columns are separate, they fit so closely together as almost to exclude water; nor are the columns themselves continuous, but composed of several pieces, generally about a foot in length, and fitting together by convex and concave surfaces. Behind, from a distance, it looks like a regular pavement, but on close inspection the wonder increases, when we find it a solid structure of dark, fine-grained basaltic pillars, united to pillars, "close as the cells of a honey-comb." The length of the central mole, or "Grand Causeway," is said to be about seven hundred feet at low water. The geology of this chief wonder of Antrim's rock-ribbed shore is so far out of my province, that I must leave the scientific reader to his own research upon the subject, closing my brief notice of the spot with a few words from Kohl, who says, after visiting the Causeway,—

On a close investigation of these wonderful formations, so many questions arise that one scarcely ventures to utter them. With

inquiries of this nature, perhaps not the least gain is in the knowledge of how much lies beyond the limits of our enquiries, and how many things that lie so plainly before our eyes, which we can see and handle, may yet be wrapped in unfathomable mystery. We see the operation of active and powerful forces, which entirely escape our scrutiny. This remark may indeed apply to a certain extent to every one of the works of nature, but in this case her operations have been carried on upon so stupendous a scale, and lie so clear before the eye, that one cannot avoid being more forcibly impressed. We walk over the heads of some forty thousand columns (for this number has been counted by some curious and leisurely persons), all beautifully cut and polished, formed of such neat pieces, so exactly fitted to each other, and so cleverly supported, that we might fancy we had before us the work of ingenious human artificers; and yet what we behold is the result of the laws of nature, acting without any apparent object, and by a process which must remain a mystery for ever to the understanding.

In the endless traditions of the country, not only is the "Causeway" itself connected with the name of Fin McCoul, the Irish giant, but all over these rocks and headlands, and other parts of the scene, the traveller will find the name of that legendary hero fancifully attached to almost every object which is either singular or striking in appearance,—the "Giant's Loom," the "Giant's Organ," the "Giant's Well," the "Giant's Chimney Tops," his bed, his grandmother, and his grave; and though this is the case especially upon this spot, the same thing pertains, more or less, to the whole coast of Antrim; indeed there is no part of "The Green Isle" where the shadowy renown of Fin McCoul is not fondly cherished by its people. On the belief in giants, Dr. Drummond says :—

It is curious to observe how generally the belief in giants has prevailed. The classical reader does not require to be reminded of

the distinguished part which they act in heathen mythology. The inhabitants of Iceland ascribe the vast basaltic masses of that island to the same agency; and we have only to consult the Edda to find that giants, or "the sons of the frost," have the same important task to fill in the mythology of the north as in that of Greece. The general ascription of such phenomena as exceed the ordinary power of mortals to the labour of giants, shows the proneness of the human mind to theorise, and its willingness to adopt or invent any theory rather than remain in suspense.

Life at the "Giant's Causeway" varies according to the time of the year. Whoever visits the place in winter will find the place bleakly grand and wild, and hardly a thing stirring in its lonely ports except the surging waves, and a few old women gathering seaweed. In summer, however, it wears a different aspect. The continued stream of changing tourists then keeps it gay; and before the traveller has reached the Causeway, he will have been met by a host of guides, anxious to point out to him the special wonders of the scene. He will find, also, a considerable number of old women and children, trying to make a thin living for themselves through the dreary winter, by the sale of photographs and "specimens." There, too, he will find "Old Mary" at the "Giant's Well." She will very likely give him a little whisky,—for the good old soul is no niggard,—and, if he would rather drink water, he'll never be stinted by Mary.

The "Giant's Causeway" forms one of the wings of Port Noffer, which is one of the three semicircular bays, immediately associated with the scene, and accessible by the pathway leading down from the hotel. The coast beyond must be seen from the water. Dr. Drummond derives the name from Port-na-Flur; or, "The Port of the Man"—that

is, of course, Fin McCoul. The cliffs are higher here even than in Port-na-Ganye ; and Port Noffer is remarkable also for a wild byeway, called "The Shepherd's Path," which winds up the almost perpendicular cliff to the top of the headland, nearly four hundred feet.





My Lodging by the Sea.

A little lowly hermitage it was.

SPENSER.

THE summer sky had been cloudless for weeks. The green pastures lay parching in the sun, and shallow rivers were beginning to pant with thirst. The pavements of the city were hot under foot, and here and there a butterfly came, like a wingèd flower, fluttering among the mazy streets, which were doomed to be the ribs of death to that silken straggler from the fields. The markets were gay with fruits and flowers. There was great traffic in posies for button-holes ; and from morning till night the hawker's cry, in little back streets, was "Sallet, oh !" Dead walls were bright with news of tempting trips into the green country ; and rosy hope, in many a jaded mind, began to "bid the distant scenes of pleasure hail !"

I was getting tired of city life ; and, as the time drew near that set me at liberty for a little while, my thoughts began to wander again towards the shores of the sea. I think there must be some touch of the old Scandinavian rover in my nature ; for the witchery of the wild ocean had laid hold of me long before I set eyes upon its heaving waves. I was proud of the naval fame of my native land ;

and, like other English lads, the vague longing for a sailor's life grew so strong in me, sometimes, that I was ready to dart away from home and friends, and plunge recklessly into an unknown career of hardship and adventure. This was in early youth ; and, perhaps, Robinson Crusoe had something to do with the matter ; but, even now,—when “the snow-fall of time” begins to whiten my brow,—I find myself rushing, as eagerly as ever, towards the great deep, and hoping to end my days in a cot that o'erlooks the wide sea. And so it was that, as the time of my freedom drew nigh, my thoughts began to wander over the troubled waters in search of an Ararat, where I might rest awhile above the deluge ; and with a wholesome dread of the flutter of fashionable resort, I cast about for a nook where I could steep myself in quietness, with little company about me except “the shapes and sounds and shifting elements” of nature, and such stray society as chance might bring to tinge my solitude with the charm of unsophisticated sympathy. . . . Still seaward was my fancy's flight ; and, after a passing glance at the sandy beach of Lancashire, all thronged with roving swarms of landward toilers, it touched at many a charming spot that gems the island's silver rim ; settling down at last upon a lonely corner of Ireland, within sight of the Donegal mountains ; and there it folded its wings and was at rest. The thought of “Dalriada's wild romantic shore” filled my mind with pleasant memories, and before many days were past I had found my way to the nest of my choice :—

Far from all people's tread,
It was a place whose pleasaunce did appere
To pass all others on the earth which were.

“Craig Dhu” was a solitary spot; but it did not seem so to me, for every feature of the scene was familiar to my mind. I knew each frowning headland and sea-worn cave; each lonely cove and creek I knew by name. The very waves that drowned the dark rocks here in showers of silvery spray, and there laved the smooth strand in love-flowing dance, full of liquid grace, and opaline hues of marvellous beauty, were old friends of mine. I knew where to find the cool translucent pools left by the tide among the rocky hollows of the shore; the brooks and rills, the lonely dells, and the wild footpaths that wandered about the green land,—everything in nature was dear to my memory; for, inly moved by a strange tenderness, I had often watched the soft purple twilight sink down upon that enchanted scene. . . . And it was not only these things that had twined their tendrils around me,—it was not only the fantastic wonders of that many-featured shore, nor the legends of the richly-storied land, all flushed with the grim red hand of Ulster: nor the wild ocean, studded with historic isles; nor the blue hills of Scotland looming in weird majesty far over the sea. It was not these alone; but, also, that I had begun to know the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, by headmark, as one may say,—Jemmy this and Alick that; and Laverty, and Davy, and the rest of the guides; and the red-shirted boatmen; and the tattered kelp-burners; and the car-boys, especially “Barney, the smiler,” who “laves it to your honour;” and “Auld Disobleege,” with his little creeping shandry, heavy laden with himself and the wife; and “Tam Tak,” who lends money “in smalls” amongst the poor neighbours; and

"Charlie Weir," and his brother "Neil," who caught the "spoutfish" when we were out in the boat one day ; and "Dan of Dulusk," with his tales of the olden time ; and the farmer who lives on the upland, near the old well, called "Tobar-righan-domhnaigh" (popularly pronounced Tubber-doney), which means the "Well of the King of Sunday ;" and then there was my old friend the master of Glenhead ; and "Little Jemmy," the gamekeeper, faithful, frisky, and full of "ferlies," and "asking no better than to do a good turn for a neighbour," yet,—

Unco' queer in a' his ways,
An' aye as dry's he'd lickit saut.

"That's the fellow that knows the ropes," said old Andy to me, one day, looking down the road after Jemmy, who was scudding through the tempest, at the rate of five miles an hour, with his body at an angle of forty-five degrees,— "that's the little fellow that knows the ropes,—more power to him !" These are a few of the folks I knew ; and they are only a few of them. There was the parson, and the schoolmaster, and old Rosy, the "Spae wife," who dealt in charms and love philters ("Spae good, Rosy," said the girls to her, one day, "Spae good, Rosy ; if we should pay ye for it!") and there was old Mary, at the well, who sold water to the thirsty wanderer, and gave "a taste o' the rale stuff" into the bargain. There was M'Shannon, the waiter at the hotel,—a brisk old soldier, and a living embodiment of "Mickey Free,"—with his rollicking fun, and his tales of wild adventure in the army. There was the red-petticoated "Shell Girl," with her specimens, and her photographs, and

her wild-tossing hair. There was poor old "Galway Molly," wandering about the shore, bare-legged, with her basket of curiosities on her arm, and her little red face swathed in a white napkin, stopping, now and then, for a pinch of snuff and a chat with a passer-by. And there was my good friend, the rector of the town, seven miles off, who gave me the run of his library, and dropped many a sage hint among his genial talk by the way. And then there were the "wee cutties" playing about the cottage doors,—we were "unco thick thegither." They would smile shyly, or call one by name, or tug at his lap, as he went by. And the folk one met on the road, and the folk at work in the fields,—we used to nod and shout to one another, about the weather, and such like. And there was a quiet friendliness amongst us, which never degenerated into rude familiarity on either side; for our meetings were accidental and untroubled; and our contact was cushioned with little natural civilities. These things had a soothing charm, which one sometimes misses in the varied bustle of resort, in which there are so many "greetings where no kindness is."

And now, about this little nest of mine. A lowly thatched cottage, of one storey, it was; with four rooms lengthwise upon the ground floor. Modestly perched upon the brow of a green knoll, overlooking the smooth curve of a little lonely strand, its white walls were visible far away down the shore; with its two end windows gazing upon the sea, like the eyes of a wondering child:—

Small was my house, and like a little cage,
For my owne turne; yet inly neat and clean.

It was fairly steeped in the witchery of the sea, for the

waves washed up to the foot of the slope within thirty yards of the door. I remember how pleasant it was to sit at the front of the house in summer, watching the salmon leap from the shimmering water, as if in defiance of the fishers on the look-out at the rock hard by. It sometimes reminded me of a ship, for the surge of the waves was in its ears by night and day, and when the south-west wind blew strong the spray came whisking against the windows, and creamy flakes of foam flew over the thatch, and in very stormy weather, I think it rocked a bit, but I am not sure. Its aspect was humble, although the walls, built of fragments of basaltic rock, were of more than cottage strength ; and there was an air of sweet rusticity about it, as if it was partly the work of man's hands, and partly the growth of the soil,—like the wild flowers and lichens that sprouted from the thatch, and crept about the foundation line, in a fondling way ; and the mosses that tinged the lowmost part of the walls with hues of delicate beauty, as if they loved the place, and longed to make it pretty. And I think it must be so ; for to me there seems to be almost human sympathies amongst those things which we call inanimate. Who can tell the nature and variety of embodiment of the principle called Life ? Who knows the secret of Being's ceaseless flow ? . . . Snug, sweet, and solitary was my little nest, and the last was not the least of its charms. It seemed to have crept away from all the landward dwellings, for the sake of lonely musing by the sea ; and there was a look of rapt attention about it, as if it was listening to music,—not only the wandering wild bird's trill, the ripple of the brooklet, the low of kine, and the weird sounds of wind and wave,—but something more

exquisite still, beyond the reach of our world-troubled senses. It had a shy look, too, as if it was conscious of a certain unfitness for the society of houses of more pretentious character, and was quite content to make the best it could of the sweet privileges of the unfashionable ; and the fair face of nature, with all its changeful charms. Altogether the little shieling was cast in a contemplative mould. And yet, sometimes in summer, when the sun lit up its windows with golden gleam, I have seen a fit of kitteny friskiness come over it, as if it would like to run down the slope and go whisking along the strand, in wild gyrations of childish glee. But when—

Phœbus with his fiery wain,
Unto his inne began to draw apace

and evening stole on, with "the kiss of dusk that quiets all the land," it gradually sank into its normal thoughtfulness again ; and by the time the daisy had shut its eye, my little lodging by the sea was wrapt in its nightly dream.

It was very pleasant to sit in that cottage, looking through its eyes at the scenery around. And then the inside of the place was full of interest to me. I will begin with the parlour, as we called it.

THE PARLOUR.—It was our reception room for swells,—imaginary swells I mean ; for very little of the real article turned up in that blessed retreat. It was not at all a grand room ; but there was a subtle singularity about it,—a cloistral quietude, and a faint aroma of quaint gentility, that was far more charming than anything grand could have been. It was the endmost room, nearest to the shore ;

low in the roof ; and it had a flat wooden ceiling, which had sometime been painted a sober drab. Its shape was peculiar ; it neither seemed short nor narrow, yet it was only a little room. It looked as if it had been square once, but had been drawn out gradually in the direction of the sea, by natural attraction. It was simple, but its simplicity was piquant ; it was meditative, but never dull. It was cosy. How that word "cosy" creeps to the heart in a soft-footed way, especially with one who is naturally lazy, and likes to get into quiet nooks and dream away the time. No matter—it was cosy. There were no pictures in the place ; no ornaments, no tawdry trinketry, no staring furniture. Indeed there was very little furniture in it of any kind ; and it looked all the better for it. What was there was useful ; and there was no veneering about it. The few things that furnished the place were substantial, and made of rare materials ; and, though simple in form, they were touched with the quaint taste of a by-gone time. They looked like bits of salvage from the wreck of some aristocratic homestead of centuries ago ; and yet, either by tasteful selection or by rare accident, they were in such fine keeping with one another, that they seemed like a little company of poverty-stricken exiles from some courtly sphere, who had crept into a corner, where they might end their days in genteel and inexpensive seclusion, safe from the impertinent curiosity of cheap and vulgar carpentry. These antique relics gave a touch of pathos to the nook they were in. . . . And then, the windows. What shall I say of those subtle dispensers of the light,—all shades of light, from the first grey tinge of morning, till the acolytes of heaven lit up

night's candles in the over-arching blue? What shall I say of those mystic inlets of the day? They were small, they were low in the wall, and they were deep-silled inside. They were soft as the dawn, and dreamy as dusky eve. They were shady, but not sombre; they were cheery, but never glaring. No matter how dark the day, they seemed to distil the gloom through an alembic that made it benign. And, when the sun was dazzling all the parched land outside, those three little windows strained out the blaze, and filled the room with a tender rosiness,—an equal tinge of delicate radiance,—that made the shadiest corner look serenely glad. I never could understand the secret of that melting suffusion—but I felt it. . . . There are rooms that seem to shout, even when there is nobody in them; but this was always still—still, with a deep and pleasing stillness. Sometimes, as I went in, I felt a fine glamour creep over me; and, with unconscious reverence, my foot fell softer upon the floor, as if the place was filled with angels. Indeed, to me, it always seemed fullest when it was empty. Each of the windows framed its own picture of the outside world; and each picture was fine, with a difference. The two at the seaward end seemed to have crept together for company. There was only the fireplace between them. They commanded a picturesque view of the shore for thirty miles, with the hills of Donegal in the background. The other window looked landward, with half an eye to the sea. Immediately under it lay the little grass-plot which divided the cottage from the road; and beyond that it looked over the top of the enclosing wall, over the road, and over the brook, up to a billowy tract of green knolls, called “The

Sand Hills,"—a wild flower-sprent solitude, full of pretty dells and wandering footpaths,—and teeming with life too,—for it was a rabbit warren belonging to the lord of the manor.

The next room to the parlour was the KITCHEN. No; not quite that, neither. The next room to the parlour was not a room at all. It was a place about two yards square, partitioned off from the kitchen, and neatly paved with red tiles. It divided the parlour from the kitchen. The front door of the house opened into it; and it had two other doors, one leading to the kitchen, the other to the parlour. Even this little spot had a speciality all its own. It was our entrance hall. Facing the front door, a little slip of a table stood against the wall, for parcels and other odd things. The fishermen left fish there, and the postman his letters; and there the herdboy left the mushrooms he had gathered for us, while wandering through the rabbit-warren with his kye. And, in summer time, the little bare-legged children, who had stolen away from home, to play about the edge of the sea, used to tap timidly at the door, and ask for a drink, in little silvery tones. In this apartment, too, folk who came to the house for admittance went through a kind of sorting process. From thence the "swells" were ushered into the parlour; and the "kitchen-folk,"—that is, everybody who did not think themselves "a pop above the murphies,"—were sent into the kitchen. Nearly everybody went to the kitchen during my time. Three or four of the "quality" *did* look in, it is true; but it was generally to ask about the rent. But I noticed that whoever came,—even if they began with the parlour,—they

were almost sure to get all over the house before they went away. We had strange visitors now and then; beggars, wandering across the country, from farm to farm; and tourists who had left the inland highway, and had come along the wild shore for the sake of its picturesque scenery.

The Kitchen was the heart of the little dwelling in more senses than one. If there was any life stirring, it was generally there. There was something in its genial bustle,—there was something in its freedom and healthy glow, that warmed the heart towards mankind at large. It was a queer-shaped little room; for, as I have said before, one square corner of it had been partitioned off, to make the “entrance hall.” It had two doors inside, each of which led up two steps, into a bed-room. These were on each side of the fire-place; and I could hear the kettle boiling over, as I lay in bed in a morning. It had two other doors, one leading from the “entrance hall,” and the other, at the back, opening into a green stackyard, swarming with poultry. In one corner of the yard there was a pigstye, which was rarely without one tenant, at the very least. And, in another corner, there was a shed for turf and bog-fir. I had great fun with the pigs and the poultry. I used to feed them; and, whenever I went into the stackyard, they followed me up and down,—a noisy, motley multitude of cocks and hens, and ducks and geese, and pigs, and, perhaps, a turkey or two,—all cackling, and grunting, and gobbling, at once, for food. This live stock belonged to the farmer who owned the cottage. And if ever we left the kitchen for a few minutes, with the back door open, it was not unlikely that on returning we should

find a pig in the place, with its nose in a pan; a few ducks paddling about the floor; and, perhaps, two or three hens on the tables. That kitchen was a great place for bowls of fresh milk and new-laid eggs, "warm from the hen." But, I think it looked its best on a baking day, when the dresser, and the table, and the delph-rack were covered with piles of "fadge," and great farles of oaten bread, and all the house was filled with a goodly smell. It was a "draughty" kitchen, full of cross-currents and whistling-holes; but it had a great fireplace that never went cold, and a grand old gaping chimney that looked right up to the sky. Sitting by the hob, I could see the clouds sailing overhead; and the twitter of sparrows, upon the thatch, came down through the rising smoke. I have heard many a curious tale by that fireside, told by stragglers who dropped in for a rest. There was a kind of wooden trough let into the thickness of the back wall, inside, for the washing of pots and such like things; and the swill ran out through a hole in the wall, to a drain in the yard. The wind came in at the hole by which the water went out; and, sometimes, it played a kind of ghostly music as we sat by the fire at night, with one or two neighbours,—giving rise to many an "eerie" tale about banshees and fairies.

My only near neighbour was the farmer who owned the cottage. He lived at another cottage a few yards off,—the only house in sight, except such as we could see dotting the country-side far away down the shore. In fine weather the farmer and I used to sit upon the knoll, chatting and watching the waves, till the kye came home at milking time. He was a tall, powerful middle-aged man, more Scotch than Irish

in his general characteristics. He had spent many years at the gold diggings in the far West, and his speech was strongly flavoured with American peculiarities. He was a man of shrewd and observant mind; and I got strange glimpses of colonial life from him. Life at the diggings was distasteful to him at first; "but," said he, "I soon fell in with it, and began shovelling strong." Speaking of the company he met with at the diggings, he said that "the Yanks were the 'cutest people on the face of the earth,—they would sit up all night to do you out of two bits." He was very fond of "three card loo," and sometimes after nightfall we turned in and took a hand together, for a half-penny a time.

We had an old friend, Rosy M'Curdy, better known by the name of "Rosy wi' the little eye," because of a defect in her sight. The children used to imitate her; they said to one another, "Come, show us Rosy M'Curdy's little eye." At the time of my stay at Craig Dhu she was nearly eighty-five years of age, and she lived about three miles off, in a little ruinous village called "Craig-na-bunya," mentioned in a local rhyme as

Craig-na-bunya,
Where there's neither meat nor money
For me and my dear honey,
Wer (our) sorrows to bewail.

Poor old Rosy! When the fit took her she would set off from home, and come hobbling all the way to Craig Dhu, with a basket of fresh eggs, and perhaps a hen or a couple of chickens. Sometimes she came trickling in at the doorway, quite unexpectedly, all steeped with rain. She was a woman of few words; and there was a settled sadness in

her look, as if she had been smitten down by some great trouble long ago. Her only indulgence was tea. I have seen her sit by the fire for hours together, after her long walk, with a cup upon the hob, quietly laying another turf on now and then from the pile in the corner, and never speaking except when spoken to. The mistress of the house knew her well, for Rosy had nursed her when she was a child. One day, when she chanced to spy old Rosy in the distance, coming slowly along the strand, she cried, "Guid guide us, yonder's old Rosy! Bless the poor auld crater, but she'll hae sair banes! Sally, put the kettle on." And then, looking dreamily through the window again, she said, "Poor old Rosy! Eh, I mind it weel when we were a' bits o' weans, she use't to tak us up the mountain to the 'Rockheads,' and then down the 'Shepherd's Path,' to gie us a bathe in the 'Port.'" (The Shepherd's Path is a dangerous track which winds down the face of a precipice, nearly 400 feet, to the seaside.) "Ay, ay," continued she, "I mind it rightly. She lived at that time in a wee cot, with an earthen floor, at the head o' the village. There was three sisters o' them,—Rosy, an' Nancy, an' Mary. Mary was a poor dementit cratur, quite helpless. She use't to sit by the fire frae morn till night, rakin' among the ashes, and mutterin' to hersel'. Poor Mary! Her sweetheart was a kelp-burner; he was killed in falling over the rocks wi' his burden. Nancy use't to gather dulse, an' go errands for folk i' the village. But Rosy was the cleverest of the three. She was fond o' childre', and she went nursin' here and there among the neighbours. She nursed me. Eh, I think I can see the cottage now. They had a joint o' the back-

bone o' a whale for a stool; it was quite black with age; it had been found upon the shore, washed up by the tide. In one corner there was an auld spinning-wheel; in another there was a pile o' turf; and the bed stood in another. There were generally two or three hens pecking about the floor; and on the window sill there were two geraniums, and sometimes a pickle o' dulse. Eh, I mind as if it was yesterday, though I was only a wee cutty then, nae bigger than Sally M'Mullen's Nanny. Ay, ay, poor old Rosy use't to take us down to the sea to bathe. When we went up to the door, she used to say, 'Come in, weans,—come in;' an' when she had got us inside she use't to shut the door, an' put the bolt in, to keep intruders out. And then she use't to say, in a whisper, 'Now, weans dear, we'll hae a drap o' tay!' Eh, I mind to this day the tin pot boilin' upon the hearth, by the turf fire. An' she had an auld kist, under the window, for a table. She use't to set the tay out on the top of the kist, an' a penny bap, an' a grain o' sugar; an' then we a' stood round the kist, gettin' wer tays, as proud as ye please, my dear. Eh, I often think that was the sweetest tay I ever tasted! . . . An' then, when the tay was over, my dear, she use't to reach down a basket, an' she put in it a couple o' farles of oaten bread, wi' carraway seeds in't, an' a piece of home-made cheese, an' a little bottle wi' a drap o' whisky in't, an' a broken wine-glass for us to drink out o'. An' when a' was ready, she would say, 'Now, weans dear, let's be going;' and away Rosy toddled with us to the 'Rockheads,' like an auld hen, wi' her chickens about her. But before we went down the 'Shepherd's Path' she made us kneel down, an' put our hands together, an' say the Lord's

Prayer, after her. An' when we had finished she used to say, ' Now, say Guid bliss us ! ' an' we a' said ' Guid bliss us ! ' An' then she took us cannily down the path, till we came to the water. And when we had bathed in the water, she gave each of us a piece o' oaten bread, an' a bit o' cheese, an' a wee taste o' whisky, out o' the broken wine-glass. An' then she sat down and watched us, whilst we ran about the shore gatherin' shells,—yellow whilk shells, as yallow as saffron; and sea-pinks; and crowbie's-purses, an' sic like. Eh, I mind it rightly." . . . "And then," continued she, after gazing silently through the window for a minute or two, "And then there was 'The Gentle Bush.' It was a great thorn that hung over the footpath, in an eerie part of the glen. Folks were afraid to pass by that tree after nightfall, an' it was well known that if anybody was to break a branch off it some harm was sure to happen to them soon after. Eh, I mind when we were a' weans, how we use't to wander away into the glen, to dress our dolls under the fairy thorn, an' there, my dear, we would sit for hours together, as happy as the day, playing with our dolls, and talking to the fairies, just as if they were listening to every word that we said. An' mind ye, we believ't that they were listening. We use't to tie bits of scarlet ribbon on the branches to gain their good will. Sam Taylor was the village shoemaker in them days. He had to go eleven miles to the nearest town to buy leather. An' when he was setting out in the morning, I use't to give him a ha'penny, and he was to call at an old-fashioned delf-shop in the town, where they kept a basin full o' coloured seed-beads in the window. They use't to sell a thimbleful for a ha'penny;

and Sam was to buy a ha'poth for me. An' sure enough, I thought of little else the whole o' that day but the beads that Sam was bringing. An' when he was late back at night, I mind how I use't to beg lave to sit up till he came home,—ay, with as much anxiety as if it was the worth of a cow he was bringing. An' wasn't I the joyful wean goin' to bed that night, wi' the beads in my hand, twisted in a bit o' paper. Next mornin', airly, I was at my cousin to pull three or four hairs out of a horse's tail for me; an' then, my dear, away we went, happy-go-lucky, down into the glen; and there we sat under 'The Gentle Bush' threading the beads upon the horse's hairs, an' making little rings of them, which we hung upon the branches, as presents for the fairy king and queen, an' the young prince and princesses. An' there we left the bead rings, an' the bits o' ribbon, hanging upon the branches, when we came away at dusk. It wasn't canny to stay later than that; for the fairies wanted the place to themselves after nightfall. It was only ours in the daytime. An' then, if there happened to be any wind in the night, many o' the rings and bits o' ribbon would be blown away when we went down into the glen next day, and we firmly believed that the fairies had carried off those that were gone. But, if we found any still hanging upon the branches, we thought we had offended them, an' we use't to talk to them, an' say how sorry we were for what we had done. It was very often in hay-time that we went to play under 'The Gentle Bush,' when the mowers were mowing in the meadows close by. An' the mowers sometimes found nests of honey when they were mowing, an' they use't to shout to us, 'Hallo, weans; here's

a bee's nest !' an' away we ran into the field to get a share of the honeycomb. At that time of the year, too, the weemen use't to be washin' wool in the burn that runs through the glen. I can see them now, trampin' the wool in the runnin' water, an' singin' like birds in the sunshine. Eh, weans dear, them was the happy days. Ireland's no like what it was ! . . . But here comes Rosy ! Now, Sally, set the tay-things."

"Old Sally" was our housemaid ; that is, she did all kinds of odd jobs, dividing her services between our cottage and the farmer's house hard by. She was past middle age, but still active and healthy, and willing to give a lift at any kind of rough work that came to hand. It was pleasant to see the young-hearted old soul paddling about so cheerfully, with bare feet, as brisk as a bee, from morning till night ; now carrying water in from the well, now fetching turf, now washing dishes, now bringing in crisp watercresses from the brook at the front of the cottage. Her husband was employed upon a farm about half a mile from my lodging, and they dwelt in a little cot upon the same land. Sally was a kind-hearted woman by nature ; and yet, to use her own words, she had "a nice wee temper" of her own ; and when anything stroked her the wrong way, she was capable of a burst of impassioned eloquence that was rather startling sometimes. "Much about you an' your calico shift," said she one day to a dainty creature from the neighbouring town who had offended her. "Much about you an' your calico shift !" (and this allusion to *calico* means all the more in a country so famous for *linen* as the north of Ireland is). "Much about you an' your calico shift !" said Sally.

“Ye’re too fat and too full, darlin’! It’s well seen on ye! Ornamintal bad luck to me, but ye’re a beauty! Wait a little, dear; ye’re not at the end of your fadge yet! Perhaps the moult might come on your feathers all of a suddint! Arrah; who’s child is this, I wonder, that’s making a holy show of herself! Maybe you might be glad to sell your top-knot yet, to buy a bap! Wait a little, dear, and perhaps the purty mouth that’s an ye might take a turn,—plaze God!” It was certainly hot whilst it lasted, but Sally’s bark was worse than her bite. The sun never went down upon her wrath. She was a fund of ceaseless geniality in our little household. Sometimes when we were sitting round the fire at night, the dog asleep on the hearth, and little Johnny dozing with his head leaned against the hob,—when the house was quiet, and all the world was still outside, except the moan of the sea and the wild sough of the wind around the lonely cottage,—Sally would tell us tales of banshees and fairies, and disasters at sea; and sometimes she would croon a song. It was a great treat to hear her sing “The Lover’s Discussion,” a song so racy of the soil that,—as it has never yet appeared in any published collection of Irish song,—I think the reader will pardon me if I introduce it here:—

One pleasant evening, when pinks and daisies closed in their bosom
a drop of dew,
And feathered warblers of every species together chanted their notes
so true,
As I did stray, wrapt in meditation, it charmed my heart for to hear
them sing;
Night’s silent arbours were softly rising, and all the air did in concert
sing.

With joy transpoorted, each sight I coorted, and gazing round with
inspective eye,
Two youthful lovers in conversation, all close engagéd, I did espy.
Those couple spoke with such force of raison, their sintiments they
expressed so clear,
That for to hearken their conversation, my inclination was to draw
near.

He pressed her hand, and he said, "My darling, tell me the raison
you've changed your mind ;
Or have I loved you to be degraded while love and innocence are in
their prime ?
For I am slighted and ill requited for all the favours I did bestow ;
You'll surely tell me, before I lave you, why you're inclined for to
trate me so ?"

With great acuteness she made him answer, "If on your favours I
would rely,
You might contrive for to blast my glory, and our marriage day you
might hover by.
Young men in ginerall are fickle-minded, and for to trust you I'm
afraid ;
If for your favours I am indebted, both stock an' int'rest you shall
be paid."

"To blast your glory I ne'er intinded, nor fickle-minded I'll never be ;
And for my debts, you can never pay them, except by true love and
loyalty.
Remember, darling, our first engagement, when childhood's pleasure
was all we knew !
Be true and constant ;—I'm thine for ever !—I'll brave all dangers,
my love, for you."

"Your proffer's good, sir,—I thank you for it,—but yet your offer I
can't receive ;
By soft persuasion and kind endearment the wily serpent beguiled
Eve.
There's other raisons might be assignéd,—the highest tide it may
ebb and fall ;
Another faymale might suit you better,—therefore I cannot obey your
call."

"Yes, I'll admit that the tide's in motion, and always moving from shore to shore ;
But still in substance it's never changing, nor ever will, until time's no more.
I'll sound your love with all loyal lovers, to fix their love on whose mind is pure,
Where no existence can ever change it, nor yet physician prescribe a cure."

Says she, "Young man, for to tell you plainly, for to refrain you I am inclined ;
Another young man, of birth and fortune, has gained my favour and changed my mind.
My future welfare I have consulted,—on fickle footing I'll never stand ;
Beside, my parents might be affronted to see you walking at my right hand."

"What had you, darling, when you were born, dear ? What nature gave you,—and so had I.
Your haughty parents, I do despise them ; your ill-got riches, I do defy.
An honest heart, love, is far superior ; your golden riches will soon decay ;
All naked into this world we came, dear, and much the same we shall go away."

"You falsify when you say you love me, and slight my parents whom I hold dear ;
I think it's justice for to despise you, since that's the course that you mean to steer.
By wealth, or fayture, or art of nature, you're not my aigual in any line.
Since I conjure you, insist no further, for to your wishes I'll not incline."

"To falsify, dear,—I do deny it ; your imputation is wrong, I swear,
Like Eve, I find you're a rale deceiver ; your heart's as foul as your face is fair.
For want of riches you merely slight me, and my complexion you do disdain ;
Our skins may differ,—but true affection, in black or white, love, it's all the same."

"Oh, curb your passion," she did exclaim, then ; "'twas not to quarrel I met you here,
But to discoorse you with moderation, and a rale intintion to make appear.

I speak in candour, I will surrender to what is daycent in every way,
If you'll submit to a fair discussion, and raison's dictates you will obey."

"It's now too late for to ask that question, when you despise me before my friends ;

Lebanon's plains, if I could command them, would not suffice for to make amends.

There's not a tree in the Persian forest retains its colour, excepting one,
And that's the laurel, which I will cherish, and always hold it in my right hand."

"The blooming laurel you may admire, because its verdure is always new ;

But there's another,—you can't deny it,—it's just as bright to the gard'ner's view ;

It's wisely resting all through the winter,—it blooms again when the spring draws near ;

The pen of Homer did write its praises ; in June and July it does appear."

"You speak exceedingly, but not correctly ; with words supported your cause is vain ;

Had you the tongue of the Syren goddess, your exaltation I would disdain.

It was your love that I did require ; but since you place it on golden store,

I'll strike my harp-string, and it shall murmur, 'Farewell, my darling, for evermore !'"

She seemed affected, and, half distracted, with exclamation she thus gave way ;

"Sir, my denial was but a trial,—ye gods, be witness to what I say !
And, oh, my love, if you don't forgive me, and quite forget my incredulity,

A single virgin through life I'll wander, while green leaves grow on the laurel tree."

So, all young maidens, I pray take warning ; let love and virtue be
still your aim ;
No worldly treasure shall yield you pleasure but those whose persons
you do disdain.
All loyal lovers will then respect you, and to your memory will
heave their sighs ;
The blooming rose and the verdant laurel will mark the spot where
your body lies.

From Ballynahinch, about two miles distant, where blackbirds warble
and thrushes sing,
With hills surrounding, and valleys bounding,—a charming prospect
all in the spring,—
There female beauty is never wanting,—the lonely stranger a refuge
finds ;
Near Mara-Timpenny, if you'll inquire, you'll find the man that has
wrote these lines.

I had a little henchman, called "Andy,"—a keen-eyed,
sprightly lad, about ten years of age. He was old Sally's
only son. He was as hard as iron, as bold as brass, and
as unstable as water ; and, like water, he ran away, when
ever he had a chance. The car-boys knew him by the
name of "The Leprechaun." He was as bright as a
squirrel, as slippery as an eel, as sly as a fox, and as mad
as a March hare ; and old Molly at the well declared that
she "never saw a miller's horse that was able to hold the
candle to him, in the regard of impudence." And yet, in
spite of all his "quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles," I
couldn't help liking the little villain ; for I knew that he
was naturally kind and true. Like the pine-apple, his
rind was prickly, but his core was sweet. But he certainly
was a queer lad,—that same Andy. He mortally hated
unbroken pots ; and I never saw any living creature with

such a capacity for devouring "fadge" and mutton. We called him "cold and hungry," for he generally *looked* cold whether he was so or not, and always *was* hungry whether he looked so or not. He was my valet, groom, butler, head-beetler, and bottle-washer; he was my perpetual tormentor, and my friend. He was my master, too; for I often found him "raither too mony for me," as we say in Lancashire. The lad knew what was right, well enough; but, if anything stood in his way he was sure to have a shy at it,—whether it was a pitcher or a commandment. Andy was supposed to be within call when wanted; but he must have known the secret of fern-seed, for he could make himself invisible at will. "A man knew not where to have him," except at dinner-time; and, if you wanted him *then*, you were lucky, for *there* he was, with a vengeance. Between meal-times he was remarkable for absence of mind; and his mind and his body went together. Indeed, they *went* a great deal, and came back very little. I never could make him out; and I certainly couldn't keep him in. But wherever Andy wandered he was sure to turn up in the pantry, at last. . . . When he left home in a morning, he was, generally, clean from top to toe. This was his mother's doing. But, after that, his outward appearance went through a series of rapid changes in the course of the day. Between wading in the sea, and rolling in the sand, and tumbling amongst the pigs, and fighting with horse-manure,—which was his favourite ammunition, when he could get nothing worse,—the little Apollo of the morning had become a pocket-copy of a nightsoil man long before the close of the

day. He was fond of turning his cap inside out, and walking with his trousers upon his arm. He was Puck, and Robin Goodfellow, and Peaseblossom, and Mustard-seed, all rolled into one. He was "my dainty Ariel," with a touch of Caliban, to dusk his beauty. He was a two-legged pantomime, that "ran" all the year round, with all the world for a stage, and the entire human race upon the free list. . . . I sometimes sent him on an errand to a neighbouring village; and the moment such a thing was mentioned his eyes began to glitter with truant anticipations. He went, of course, but it was like flinging a feather into a fitful breeze. It was a toss-up whether he came back again the same day or not; but, if he did, the message had either taken another shape, or he had forgotten it altogether. I used to take note of him when he was receiving instructions,—for he was a picture. Whilst I was speaking he would stand, like a statue, in an attitude of open-mouthed attention; and when I had done, he would start away, at a steady pace, with downcast eyes, as if brooding upon the message he had received. In the meantime, I leaned against the door cheek, crooning to myself, "Oh, mother, he's going away;" and speculating on the chances of his return. He went well enough, till the first turning took him out of sight; and then,—*"Sing, oh be joyful!"*—with a whoop and a twirl, up went his heels; and, laying his ears back, he scoured across the plain, like the wild ass of the desert, in several directions at once, as if he meant to go on "as far as God has any ground." Then, all on a sudden, he would pull up, and, without rhyme or reason, begin whistling and dancing, *"forninst the wide world,"*—

winding up with another dash at the universe in general. That was my man Flibbertigibbit. As soon as he had turned the first corner,—farewell, my darling !—from that blessed minute the jocund day ran by on silver wheels for Andy.

My most constant companion was a little Skye terrier, called "Paddy." Paddy was an old dog. He had no teeth, and he had only one eye. But that eye, like the eye of Tom Rance, the Cheshire huntsman, in Mr. Warburton's famous song,—was "worth mony another's two." Paddy and I were very thick. He slept on a mat in my bedroom by night ; and when I went by day, he went with me. He was fond of worrying bits of stone, which he seemed to take for petrified rats. I used to indulge him now and then. It pleased him, and it did his teeth no harm ; for, as I said before, he had none. The poor old dog was subject to a curious kind of fits, which disabled his hind legs, and contracted his body into a hard arch. I knew when the fit was coming on, by the short, sharp, beseeching yelp he uttered as he struggled painfully up in the rear, trailing his helpless hind legs. And then I used to lay him upon his back, and rub him briskly, which seemed to bring him to soonest of anything. And all the while he would lick my hand, and thank me with his one bright eye. In a few minutes we were off again, as lively as ever, and he was tugging at the slops of my trousers, to get me to fling another stone for him. We were great friends, Paddy and I.

The bedrooms were about two feet above the level of the rest of the house, and they lay endlong from the kitchen. Three steps led up from one side of the fireplace to my own

room ; and three steps and a lobby led from the other side of the fireplace to the farthest room. In my own bedroom the bed's head was close to the back of the kitchen chimney. I have often lain there, sleepless, through the long watches of the night, reading by the light of a mould candle, and listening to the sounds which inhabit the dark hours, when all the daylight world is lying still,—the moan of the sea, surging up within a few yards distance ; the wind souging around the lonely cottage, and whistling in its crevices and lockholes ; the creek and rattle of doors ; the shrill squeak of small creatures prowling about, outside ; the mice pattering to and fro upon the wooden ceiling overhead, and, when the window was open, the ripple of the brook that ran by the front of the house down into the sea ; and, when morning came again, I could hear old Sally paddling about the kitchen, and talking to herself. Indeed, I was so near that I could almost hear the kettle sing. When the window was open I could see, from my bed, the tops of the knolls on the other side of the brook ; and, early in summer-time, the herd-boy came every morning with his kye, and there he used to sit upon the brow of a green eminence in front of the house, singing like a wild-bird, with his cattle grazing in careless freedom about the undulant land, or drinking from the brook in the hollow. I have often lain there in a morning wearied with sleeplessness, listening to his cheery carol, and to the prattle of children who had wandered down from the nearest village to play among the sand-hills by the sea. . . . The end-most bedroom was occasionally occupied by two children. When morning came and they awoke from "slumbers light

that fly the approach of day," I could hear them talking to one another in bed ; and sometimes at night, after they had said their prayers, I could hear old Sally teaching them the following lines :—

There are four corners to my bed ;
There are four angels round my head :
Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.

And when Sally had kissed them, and she had said, "Now good night, weans, get to sleep, and God bless you !" and she had closed the door behind her, I could hear them chattering on, in little trebles, about which was Mark's corner, and which was Luke's corner : till at last the trills of chicken-music died away in lessening fits of drowsy cadence ; soft-fingered sleep shut down the lids upon their cherub eyes ; the little house was still ; and I was left alone, listening to the voices of the night.

Apart from the glamour of the ocean, the immediate neighbourhood of my cottage, though bleak and lonely to the eyes of a careless passer-by, was rich in interest to me. About three yards below the level of the house, a grass-grown road led down by the front, winding away by the rocky margin of the sea up to an uninhabited mansion, occupying a green plot of land in a rugged nook of the shore, overfrowned by the wild headlands, and out of sight of the cottage. I often roamed about that lonely house, and lounged upon its foam-flecked lawn, watching the waves and dreaming away the time. A little nearer to my lodging, and in full view from its windows, a wild pile of jagged rocks stood out defiantly amongst the assailing waves, which

sometimes drenched them to their topmost tip in hissing showers of spray. And there, half hidden among the peaks of the basaltic crag, a square, stone-built hut was nestled, for the shelter of the salmon-fishers. In the fishing season there was always something going on at the rock. I used to watch the fishermen from my window; and I often ran down to see them haul in the net. Sometimes I took the papers down to the hut and read the news; and they were always eager to hear what was going on in the busy world far away. The fishermen did not sleep in the hut; their homes were miles off. They generally left the place about set of sun; but the dawn of summer morning saw them down at the rock again. These fishing stations abound all along this part of the coast of Donegal.

The brook in front of the cottage, and the rabbit warren on the other side of it, were a ceaseless source of pleasure to me. A short footpath led down from the house, between two roofless cottages and an old ruined corn-mill, to a part of the brook where it spread out into a shallow pool. A few rude stepping-stones made a slippery pathway across—

With interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint;

and there, in a mossy nook under the shoulder of the bank, a beautiful spring,—“Tubber-na-Shie,” or “The Fairy Spring,”—came gushing down amongst a great bed of water-cresses. At that spot, both the bed of the stream and all its lush borders were thick with water-cresses. It was pleasant on a summer day to sit there, in the cool shade, upon a stone, opposite to the spring, plucking crisp cresses

from the brook, and eating them to home-baked bread and butter, such as cities seldom see. It was pleasant to sit there all alone, listening to the liquid minstrel's song. That little stream was one long silver string of changeful charms. It came whimpering down from the distant hills, beautifying many a beautiful spot upon its way. The limpid wanderer worked its passage too, for here it left a side-pool, where the farmers steeped their flax; and there, again, it fed a by-wash that turned a mill. It came through a pleasant landscape of varied feature. Tinging with emerald the borders of its wild birthplace, it took its way with willing sport to the wild ocean,"—now gliding in sweet meander along the posied plain; now singing blithely through a lonely glen; now wandering wild again

With devious freaks.
Through moss and moor, and bent and ferns,
As careless as the wilful wind.

Here, it lingered; there, it hurried along again; now gurgling in smothered glee; now laughing in full-throated delight; now croodling in amorous tones to the wild flowers on its marge; now tumbling over a tiny fall in liquid tinklings.

It chattered over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles;
It bubbled into eddying bays,
It babbled on the pebbles.

Ah, when shall I trace again, with unwearied foot, the wanton waters of that little stream, upon its seaward way, with the soft blue sky above me?

The rabbit-warren was of great extent,—a beautiful tract

of undulant land, full of secluded dells; and rich in plants and delicate wild flowers, of kinds which I have not noticed elsewhere; and it was all interlaced with winding footpaths, which seemed as if they had nothing on earth to do but wander, and didn't care where they went. It was free to all feet; though one seldom saw anybody there. A road led across it down to the shore, by which carts came to fetch seaweed, used by the farmers as manure. The beauty and the solitude of the warren were delightful to me; and rarely a day passed in which I did not take a stroll across it, to the side of a salmon-stream, which ran into the sea at about a mile distant from my lodging. I used to set off with Paddy at my heels; and, on our way, we often stopped in a certain dingle, where a rivulet came trickling through the waste. There Paddy took a drink; and there I sometimes sat me down to listen to the streamlet's low, sweet under-song. It brought to mind those beautiful lines in the old Scottish version of the Psalms,—

He leadeth me through pastures green,
The quiet waters by.

Paddy was as much pleased with that ramble as I was myself; and he did no harm,—because he couldn't; though he rushed to and fro as if he meant to worry all creation before he went home again. But I think the rabbits knew that he had no teeth, and that he was half blind; for they seemed in no great hurry about the matter. Away they went, of course, with the whites of their tails wagging in the air,—away they went into their holes; but, as soon as he turned from them, there they were again, peeping out after

him, with eyes full of innocent pity for the infirmities of their poor old foe. I rather liked to see him chasing the "small deer" in this way. It made one feel as if he was poaching; and, as I lounged along, I have more than once caught myself crooning the old English poacher's song,—

The very first night we had bad luck ;
 Right fal der dal layrol, right fal laddadie ;
 For one of my very best dogs got stuck ;
 Right fal der dal layrol lay.
 I'll take my pike-staff in my hand,
 And I'll range the woods till I find that man ;
 And I'll tan his hide right well,—if I can ;
 Right fal der dal layrol li day !

The wild headlands of the neighbourhood abound in sublime scenery ; the little strand, shut out from the rest of the world, was a quiet wandering-ground by the edge of the waves ; and the sloping fields behind the cottage were rich in shamrocks,—“Erin's native shamrock,”—the little historic gem, the creeping trefoil, with the branching stem. I often gathered them to send to my friends in England. In some places thereabout, they cover the ground like a delicate embroidery,—

Where'er you pass,
 A triple-grass
 Shoots up with dew-drops streaming ;
 As softly green
 As emeralds seen,
 Through purest crystal gleaming.

Such were a few of the friends I found in my lodging by the sea, where, for a little blessed while, “I made me posies as the day ran by ;” and to me, indeed, it was “like a spot in the desolate waste, which an angel had touched in its flight.”



An Irish Patriarch.

My age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

THERE are some people that one would rather see through a telescope than with the naked eye. Like the crater of Vesuvius, they look well in the background, but they are bad to bide at arm's length. But, during my stay in the north of Ireland, in the autumn of 1869, I met with a man whose hand I was glad to grasp,—a man of a million,—for he was not only quaint and kindly-natured and quietly-cheery, but he was a hundred and three years old,—and seemed not unlikely to live a few years longer.* It was a rare pleasure to me, for it is not every day one can sit down to chat with a centenarian who has all his wits about him.

On the top of a green eminence about a mile from the Giant's Causeway, there is a little village called Cairn-side, or, "The side of the burial-place," and about a mile from that there is another village, called Cairn-kirk. Probably

* About three months after my visit to the old man, I received the news of his death.

some man of note has been laid to rest there, in the time of the old Irish wars,—some Danish chieftain, perhaps, has left his bones in that spot, hoping to reach that wild paradise where he could sit eternally guzzling ale out of the skulls of his enemies ; for those fierce pirates troubled these coasts terribly about nine centuries ago. Cairn-side is a snug cluster of farm houses and their cottage dependencies, which have crept together in a bowery nook of the hill top, to keep one another warm, and have fallen asleep whilst listening to the sea. It is lifted out of the reach of bustle, although within half-a-mile of the stream of life which passes along the road to the Causeway. There is nothing artfully-beautiful about the place at all. It is true that two or three of its best houses are whitewashed and slated, and look as if they had come from somewhere else, on a holiday visit to their poor relations ; but the rest are little cots,—humbly rustic as so many field flowers,—roughly built of fragments of basaltic rock, and roofed with grass-grown thatch ; and here and there is one in a picturesque state of untenanted ruin,—roofless, and with windowless and bulging walls. There are patches of garden in the village, too, where kitchen growth divides the soil with fuschias and aromatic flowers and plants ; and, here and there, an orchard tree. There are stunted trees and bour-tree bushes about it, too ; and they all lean one way, as if the prevailing winds came from the sea ; and when the harvest time “crowns the year with goodness,” little round stacks begin to appear in rows, about the borders of the village, relieved here and there with dark ridges of turf piled up for use in the coming winter. Cairn-side is a little green nook of retired rural life,

upon the hill top,—shy, sweet, and pensively-serene,—a tranquil playmate of the piping winds. It seems to belong as much to the sky as to the ground. It smells of cows and posies ; and its air is musical with the twitter of birds, the milkmaid's song, and the careless whistle of the lounging herd-boy. The pleasant sounds of the farm-yard make it naturally glad. The drowsy chant of the waves is in its ears by night and day ; and the voice of Bush Foot brings up to the hill top the news of approaching rain. Every wind that blows harps upon its tiny gables, and wandering sunbeams, "gliding apace, with shadows in their train," love to linger in that simple mountain nest. It is moated round with slopes of green ; and the breezy little hermitage looks quite content with that isolated perch, although one or two of its houses peep over the edge of their nestling-place, as if they wanted to see what was going on in the world. A little streamlet comes wimpling down the glen,—like a silver fringe upon the skirt of the hill,—and here and there the water is dammed up into side pools, for the farmers to steep their flax in. The village commands a vast and varied view ; on one side the craggy coast of Antrim, from the Causeway to Macgilligan's Head, at the mouth of Lough Foyle, and the wild mountains of Donegal ; and, far over the sea, the frontier sentinels of the Western Isles,—hills of Islay, and the Paps of Jura,—stand weirdly dim in the heaving waters ; to the eastward the Isle of Rathlin and the coast of Cantire,—and, further away, the mountain tops of the Scottish main ; on the south-east, beyond a pleasant landscape, all besprent with villages and white farm-houses, the graceful round of Knocklade rises nearly two thousand

feet, and the irregular range of the Slemish mountains marks the country of "The Glens" and the line of the east coast of Antrim ; and, immediately under the eye, the chimney-tops of Sir Edmund Macnaughten's mansion peep out from the woods of Dunderave, and the blue smoke of Bushmills rises from the valley below. It was the striking appearance of Cairn-side, as seen from the distance, that first attracted my attention ; and some passing remark upon the subject to a friend called forth the fact that a man dwelt there who was one hundred and three years old. "You've seen mony a strange thing in your time, nae doot," said he, "but there's something in Cairn-side that would be new anes for ye,—for as quiet a spot as it looks. There a man lives who is one hundred an' three years auld, an' no that ill at his meat yet but he may see baith you an' me oot."

Soon after this I was invited to visit the old man, the way having been prepared for me by a friend. It was about the beginning of harvest time, and his son, who is a substantial farmer, and with whom he dwells, was away in the fields. I was shown into a little parlour which looks forth upon the garden, at the front of the house, where I was speedily joined by his daughter and his daughter-in-law, from whom I learnt the following particulars relative to the life of James Todd, which, though trivial in themselves, become very interesting when associated with a man who has lived one hundred and three years in this world of ours, and who is yet comparatively hale in body, and of a clear and cheerful mind. He was born in the year 1765, at the farmhouse of Craig-a-Hullion, about two miles from Port-

rush, and he has lived seventy years in the little village of Cairn-side. He has always worked in the land and amongst cattle; and he has always been a temperate man, though not a total abstainer. "I *have* seen him a little hearty now and then, but very seldom." This was told to me afterwards by his son, who is himself a staid and abstemious man, and an elder of the Presbyterian Church, well stricken in years. All his life long the centenarian patriarch has been a healthy man, and a regular and temperate eater of simple food. He is still regular at his meals, and ready for them. At dinner he "eats whatever is going,"—that is, they have no necessity to prepare special dishes for the old man. The son says,— "My father is stronger than I am, and he can eat what I cannot." At eight o'clock he takes his usual supper of oatmeal porridge and milk, and retires to bed, and he goes upstairs and dresses and undresses himself without assistance. His breakfast of tea and toast is taken up to him at eight in the morning, after which he has a second sleep till ten. He then dresses himself and comes down, and the old man is still able to shave himself. He never lies down nor sleeps during the day, but sits by the kitchen fire nursing the children; and sometimes he has the whole four of them about his knees at once. He likes to hear what is stirring in the world outside, and his daughter tells him the news from day to day. His wife died at the age of ninety-three. He was then ninety-two, and his brother, who lived in the same village, was ninety-five. Whilst a young man he took a trip to North America, and the voyage was full of storm and disaster. The ship was beaten to and fro twelve weeks upon the high seas. There were fifty-seven persons died of

fever during the passage, and two of the afflicted leaped overboard in a frenzy, and were drowned. In addition to this, twenty-nine of the passengers and crew were pressed into the King's service by a British frigate. The old man has still vivid remembrances of this and many other strange events that happened during the first half of his life ; and he likes to chat about them when he can get a kindly listener. Indeed, I understand that he remembers things that happened three-quarters of a century ago better than things that befel yesterday. He sometimes tells, with a kind of pride, how well he remembers a Highland herdsman of his father's carrying him upon his shoulders through the village when he was "a little bare-leggit chiel, scarcely five years auld." The reader will note here that the language used by the old man is that of one descended from the Scottish settlers in the North of Ireland, and not of the ancient Milesian race.

It wanted about an hour of the old man's bed-time as I sat in the little parlour conversing with his daughter and daughter-in-law, on that fine summer evening, when, in the midst of our talk, the sound of slow footsteps, accompanied by the measured clank of two sticks, came along the passage leading from the kitchen. "This is my father," said his daughter, as the aged veteran made his appearance in the doorway. He entered the parlour unassisted, and with steady step, though slow ; and, as I rose from my seat, the old man, with a touch of antique courtesy, bade me "Good evening !" and, in a slightly tremulous voice, begged that I would not be disturbed. He was a square-built man, with thin white hair. He was considerably bent, beneath the

load of a century of years, and he walked with a stick in each hand, though there was no shakiness in his gait, and he had evidently been a strong, round-limbed man, about five feet seven in height, in his best days. Taking the chair on the opposite side of the window, he said, as he shook hands with me, "I understand you are a stranger in these parts, sir. Well, well, I am very glad to see ye!" He then began to chat freely upon times and events that were long before my day, and his talk was laced with many a little bit of racy quaintness that smacked of the olden time. He remembered the town of Portrush when there were only three wee thatched houses in it; and he remembered a congregation of four at the old church of Ballywillan, consisting of the rector, the clerk, the "gravemaster," and himself. He had many fearful recollections of the Irish Rebellion in 1798; and, now and then, wandering away among these ancient memories, he would say, "About eighty years ago so and so lived at such a place, and his brother Angus had a good farm hard by,—but, what am I speaking o',—what, ye wadna be born then." Alluding to his present condition, he said, "My eyes are beginning to fail me lately. I cannot read now, but I can understand the Scriptures when I hear them read." And so the old man chatted on, in his quaint way, for half an hour, as we sat there in the quiet gloaming of a summer day,—his little granddaughter, scarcely eighteen months old, playing at the feet of her grandsire of one hundred and three,—the most touching meeting of the morning and evening of human life I ever beheld. And when the old man rose and took his leave, I thought, as he disappeared in the doorway, that, perhaps, I should never look upon his like again.



The Isle of Rathlin.

CHAPTER I.

Where Rathlin braves the surge that round her rolls,
With chalky bastions and basaltic moles,
Dwelt fair Blanaid, of poets' song the theme,
Fair as the maid of every poet's dream ;
Tinged was her cheek with health's vermillion dye,
And joy and beauty frolicked in her eye ;
For every youth her subtle charms she wove,
And bound in fetters of relentless love,
Till Ullin's arms prevailed, and Conrigh's blade
Had widowed Rathlin's towers, and won the maid.

THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY,

DURING my rambles about the headlands in the neighbourhood of the Giant's Causeway, I had often seen the Isle of Rathlin, far away in the sea, between Bengore, the most northern point of Ireland, and the Mull of Cantyre, in Scotland, sometimes looming weird and dim amongst the misty waves, at others, so clear that the green land was distinguishable from tracts of heather ; and white streaks seemed to glitter in the sun, here and there, where the limestone crops out upon its sombre shore of basaltic rock. Rathlin is a singular spot,

both in its character and its history. Although less than nine miles from Ballycastle, on the Irish coast, its inhabitants have very little traffic with the mainland; and they are accustomed to speak both of Ireland and Scotland as of foreign kingdoms. I found that the island was difficult of access, on account of the infrequency of communication, and also on account of the dangerous nature of the channel, — “Slunk-na-Marra,” or, “The Hollow of the Sea,” which divides it from the Irish coast; and I think this made me long more than ever to see the place. In the meantime, an unexpected opportunity of visiting the island presented itself. Whilst staying in Portrush, I learnt, by accident, that a new Catholic chapel was to be consecrated in Rathlin, on a certain day; and that boats were to be provided to take the Bishop of Down and Connor and his clergy across from Ballycastle to the island, on the morning of that day. Ballycastle is eighteen miles from the town of Portrush; and, in the grey dawn of a cold autumn morning, I left the latter place, upon a jaunting-car, accompanied by the Earl of Antrim’s land steward. The first five miles of our way led along the edge of the sea, till we came to the town of Bushmills, so famous for salmon and whisky. The fingers of the market clock pointed to five as we rode through Bushmills. We met a few shivery stragglers, on their way to work; and we caught sight of a half-awakened face, here and there, peeping through the windows, as we rattled by. We passed a grocer’s shop or two; a shoemaker’s shop; three or four whisky shops, in different states of dinginess; a gloomy-looking building called a “court-house; an hotel; a draper’s shop, at a corner; and after

that the houses seemed to grow poorer and smaller, till the last of them dribbled away behind us, and we were out at the town-end, with the morning breeze blowing about us, fresh from the sea. Dan and I began to chat across the car, but very soon lapsed into silence again; and then we rode on, mile after mile, through the cold wind, unaccompanied by any sound except the sough of the wind, the chirrup of birds in the hedges, the cackle of geese, as we passed some poverty-stricken roadside farmstead, and the wailing voice of the car-boy, who had begun to croon an old Irish song:—

On the deck o' Patrick Lynch's boat,
I sat in woful plight,
With my sighing all the weary day,
And weeping all the night;
Were it not, that full of sorrow,
From my people now I go,
By the blessed sun, it's royally
I'd sing thy praise, Mayo.

When I dwelt at home, in plinty,
An' my gold did much abound,
In the company of fair young maids,
The Spanish ale went round——

Then pointing ahead with his whip, he cried out, "Murther sheery! Did ye see that?"

"What was it?"

"A thunderin' big weazle, crossin' the road, beyant there? An' a mighty great hurry he was in, too,—the blackguard!" Then, giving the horse a switch, he cried, "Go along out o' that! Are ye dramin', or schamin', ye divil? Bedad, your memory's not half as long as your tail; for I've no sooner

laid the flax on your bones than ye forget it's been there."
Then he struck up the song again,—

Oh, they're altered girls in Irrul, now,
They're grown so proud an' high,
With their ribbons an' their top-knots,
For I pass their buckles by ;
But it's little now I heed their airs,
Since God will have it so,
That I must depart for foreign lands,
And lave my own Mayo !

Then, giving his horse another switch, he cried, "Och, quit yer capers, ye divil ; an' don't be after tryin' to walk on three legs. Sure, it's not a funeral yer at."

The next ten miles of our journey lay across a dark waste,—level, lifeless, and lonely,—except where it was relieved, at long intervals, by some poor, slobbery farmstead, or a little ramshackle hamlet of miserable huts. And, here and there, the walls of a ruined cottage stood, far apart, upon the landscape, making the solitude around look more solitary still ; or a half-dressed, unkempt cotter, crept out of some wretched shieling by the wayside ; and, as he stood stretching his arms, and gazing with hopeless eyes across the sombre expanse, he seemed as if he was looking out for something to help him through another dreary day. Then came a vast tract of bog. Turf, turf, turf,—dark turf,—everywhere around. Turf cut in clods, and ranged in long, open lines, for drying,—“winrows,” as the Lancashire folk would call them,—turf “footed,” turf “rickled,” and turf “castled.” These are the terms used by turf-cutters for the different modes of arranging the clods

after they are cut. Here was dry turf piled in great stacks, to protect it from the rain, until it was carted away by purchasers, and there were immense gaps in the bog from which the turf had been excavated. This was, indeed, a wild-looking bit of our planet,—a doleful scab on the face of the earth, with very little visible life upon it, and what life we found crawling there, was of such a downcast kind that it saddened the aspect of the desolation around. Upon this spot there seemed to be nothing but bog between us and the round top of Knocklade,—ten miles off. . . . As we rode on, in silence, I fell into a kind of dream of the days when the ancient chieftains of Ulster,—the O'Neills, the O'Cahans, and the O'Donnells,—rode across the dark plain, at the head of their wild clans. This tract may then have been more of a bog, it may have been less drained even than it is now ; but its general aspect cannot have been much unlike what it is to-day. The summit of Knocklade,—and yon more distant range of mountains, among which the truncated cone of Sleimis holds dominion over the surrounding scene, must have looked much the same to them as they did to us, on that cold autumn morning. By the way, Sleimis is the mountain upon which Saint Patrick is said to have kept sheep when a captive boy.

Rise, rise ye ages, from the midst of night,
Rend time's dark veil, and burst upon my sight,
Round Sleimis see what beams of glory play,
A sainted stranger pours the flood of day !

We are now at the head of a gentle slope, which descends to the town of Ballycastle, in the pleasant valley, about a

mile off. On a slight eminence, at the left hand side of our way, stands the ancient burial ground of Romoan. The church is gone. In my wanderings about this part of Ireland I have noticed how many such ancient graveyards there are, where the churches to which they belonged are either in ruin, or have wholly disappeared. The houses of the dead last longer than the houses of the living; and mouldering bones have not much temptation for the spoiler. . . . But we are approaching Ballycastle, which, in the ancient Irish, is called "Ballycashlain," or "Castletown."

Ballycastle derives its name from a castle built there in 1609, by Randolph, Earl of Antrim, who was directed by James I. to raise "fair castles," at reasonable distances, upon his vast estates, that the country might be more speedily civilised and reduced to obedience. The town is situated at the head of the bay to which it gives name, in a beautiful valley, at the foot of Knocklade. Knocklade is a great, round-shaped, graceful mountain, and, as we approached it from about a mile's distance, it looked as if it was cultivated to the very top. The whole slope is divided into different fields, and its surface is mottled, with different hues of growth, in different states of cultivation. On the summit of the mountain stands a lonely cairn, called in the ancient Irish, *Cairn an truir*, or "the grave of three." But even tradition is silent as to what three they are that have been buried there so long. A thousand storms have swept over their lonely grave, on the wild top of Knocklade; their history is as mute as the mountain upon which they lie; their memories are as dead as themselves. . . . There are some ruins of the castle from which the town

derives its name, and also some ruins of the abbey of Bona Margy, a religious house, founded in 1509, by Charles MacDonnell, for monks of the Franciscan order.

Where Margy's walls, unroofed and mouldering stand,
'Mid the long rye-grass rustling o'er the sand,
Where many a heaving sod, and rustic stone,
Death, dread destroyer, mark the place thy own.
What sacred orisons with morn arose,
What heaven-taught vespers blest the evening's close !
Lost to the world, its follies all forgot,
There chose the monk his calm contented lot,
Told o'er his beads, his useless vigils kept,
Or o'er the pages of the fathers slept.

Bona Margy is still the burial place of the Antrim family, who have put a new roof on a small oratory erected over the ashes of their ancestors, above the window of which is a Latin inscription, scarcely legible, importing that it was built in 1621, by Randolph MacDonnell, Earl of Antrim. In 1811 there was found, by the side of a rivulet, near the town, a flexible rod of gold, composed of twisted bars, thirty-eight inches long, hooked at each end, and weighing twenty ounces and a half ; it was declared to be a Roman torque, and probably brought here by some of the Danish or Scottish ravagers of Roman Britain. Ballycastle was once a manufacturing town of some importance. It had a good harbour, and, in the immediate neighbourhood, there were breweries, glass-works, and collieries, all in full work. It also produced a considerable amount of linen yarn. But almost all these elements of industry have declined. The harbour is choked up, the pier and quay are a heap of ruins ; and the town is now chiefly notable for agricultural

produce. There is a little fishing in the bay ; and the Isle of Rathlin sends ponies, horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, beans, peas, oats, and some linen yarn, to its market.

As we drew near Ballycastle we began to meet people hurrying on their way to work. Shutters were being taken down, here and there ; dogs were barking and frisking together about the fish stones, and the life of a new day was just beginning to stir. The road enters the town about the middle, just in front of the market-place. The car whisked round the right-hand corner, and almost immediately stopped at the door of Laverty's Inn. There was a dusty, rough-and-tumble appearance about the exterior, and the smell of whisky mingled with a damp earthy aroma,—as if the place had been a potato warehouse a fortnight before, and had not been cleaned out since it changed hands. But when I got into the house I found the kernel better than the shell had led me to expect. . . . It was about seven in the morning when we got to Laverty's door. By this time I felt hungry, and I was glad to find that Dan had already ordered breakfast for two, and was pacing to and fro, and rubbing his hands in anticipation of the feast. It was a cold morning, and we had ridden eighteen miles. The landlord came smiling from the rearward of the house. He was a stout, middle-aged man, with a good-humoured countenance. He wore a cloth cap, and there was a mealy work-like appearance about his clothing. He looked like a man who was ready to tackle any kind of job that might turn up. He was not unlike an active grocer in a Lancashire manufacturing town. But I soon found that he was a genuine Irishman to the backbone.

"Good mornin' to ye, Mister Dan," cried he, to my fellow-traveller. "How are ye the day? Faith, ye had a cold ride this mornin'. Come along here, the pair o' yees. Just take half-uns apiece wi' me, afore ye go to breakfast. Come along, sir," continued he, as he shook hands with me. "You're a friend o' Dan's; an' I'm glad to see ye."

The buxom landlady stood smiling on the other side of the counter. She filled the glasses in an instant, and as she handed the drink to us, she said, in most musical Milesian brogue,—

"There's for yees, gentlemen! That's the stuff for a cough or a cowl. The breakfast 'll be ready in a couple o' minutes, Mister Dan. In the old room to the fore, Mister Dan. An', faith, I hope yees are in dacent trim, for it's a cold journey yees left immadiately behind yees this mornin'."

As she was speaking a bare-footed girl hurried by, with a tray full of boiled eggs.

"Norah, dear," said the landlady, "did ye mind the eggs? Sure ye know Mister Dan requires them boiled aisy."

"Sure, I kept my eye on them, ma'am," replied the girl, "an' the ham is at the fire."

"That's right, dear," answered the landlady. Then, turning to Dan, she continued, "Sure, I done a nice dish o' chops for yees myself, Mister Dan."

"Thank ye, ma'am," says Dan.

"An', look here now, gentlemen," says the landlord, "if there's anything else ye can think of, bi way of a little divarsion for the teeth this cold mornin', I hope ye'll spake out, an' don't be lavin the house longin'."

"Och, what 'ud we want more?" replied Dan. "Sure the mistress knows right well how to spread the board for a hungry traveller,—divil a one better. Faith, I don't know what else we'd require, barrin' it was a shark, done on the gridiron."

"Oh, well, indeed, then, Mister Dan," said the landlord, "ye might as well ask for holy water in an Orange lodge."

As we stood chatting thus at the counter side, a startling object came into the doorway. It was one of those mendicants known in the south of Ireland by the name of "lamiters." The head and bust were those of a man of more than ordinary size and strength, ending in a little bundle of rags, upon a kind of sledge. This strange fragment of humanity was propelled to and fro by a pair of long and powerful arms, which worked with wonderful alacrity. As the "lamiter" came slinging up to the counter side, it was evident that he was well known in the place, for he cried out in a free and sonorous voice,—

"Mornin' t'ye, Missis Laverty!"

"Mornin', sur," replied she, looking down across the counter.

"Would you oblige me wid a half-un o' malt, ma'am, plaze?" said he, rubbing his hands.

"I will," replied she, whisking round to reach a glass.

"An', for the love o' God, Missis Laverty," continued he, gazing upwards, "give us a good taste this cold mornin', ma'am; an' good luck to ye."

"Faith, I will," replied she, and when she had filled the glass she bent down over the counter, and as she handed the drink to him, she said,

"Try that, now."

"Long life t'ye, ma'am!" replied he, reaching his arm up for the glass. "Here's t'ye, Missis Lavery."

And in an instant the whisky was gone.

The "lamiter" uttered a low inarticulate sigh of satisfaction, as the drink trickled down his throat; and then, giving his lips a smack, as a kind of farewell kiss to a departing joy, he cried,—

"Good mornin' t'ye, Missis Lavery!"

And then the brawny arms slung the strange trunk out at the doorway.

Dan and I did justice to the bountiful spread before us, that morning; after which, I took my way towards what is called "The Lower Town," down by the seaside. There is nothing very remarkable in "The Upper Town," with its little shops and whisky stores; its modern church; its worn fish-stones in the centre of the market place; and its dingy cottages, which wear a faint appearance of having been whitewashed some time ago; indeed, the whole town has a kind of washed-out look, as if it was brooding with a disappointed heart upon days gone by, and had given up struggling against the approach of decay.

A broad road, about half-a-mile long, divides the upper from the lower town, and it is lined with fine trees, and overlooks a beautiful green valley on the right hand side. The dwellings improve in appearance as we descend this road; they grow cleaner, more tasteful, and better appointed in every way,—in fact, the suburb hangs upon the upper town like a fringe of new silk upon a worn-out shawl.

It wanted a few minutes to nine when I got down to the

rude landing-place, from which the boats were to start. The passengers had not all mustered ; and the boatmen were wandering in and out among the white cottages, facing the sea.

"Ye're all in good time, sir !" cried one of the boatmen. "Sure, the clargy are not down yet."

There were two boats going over to Rathlin, chartered for Dr. Dorrian, the Bishop of Down and Connor, and about a dozen of the clergy of his diocese, and their friends ; and I think I must have been the only person in the company who was not going specially to be present at the consecration. Whilst waiting the arrival of the bishop and his clergy, I sauntered about among boatmen, and fishermen, and folk from the town, who had come down to see the boats off.

"Are ye goin' over to the island, sir?" cried old Archy Weir, a short, stiff-built, weather-beaten Triton, who looked as shrivelled and tough as a dried haddock.

"Yes."

"That's right," replied he. "Ye'll go over in our boat, the 'Old Erin;' the other boat is taking the bishop, and as many o' the clargy as possible. The rest o' the clargy is goin' over with us, in the 'Old Erin.' There's plenty of time yet, sir. The other boat starts first. I'll look out for ye," and then, as he looked quietly around, and up from sea to sky, he said, "I hope we'll have a good passage,—plaze God."

Our boat was the worst of the two, and it was worse manned. The crew consisted of a lad about sixteen years old ; another hungry-looking slip scarcely twenty ; old

Archy Weir, who acted as skipper; and a little simple-hearted boatman called Hugh MacKinley, who was joint owner of the boat with John Brown, landlord of a little "public" near the landing-place.

Whilst wandering about the cottages by the beach, I had got into talk with a young tailor, who sat at work upon his shop-board close to the window, whilst his tall, fresh-looking wife sat upon a three-legged stool by the fire, with her bare-footed children playing about her, when old Archy looked in at the window, and said,

"We're getting ready for a start, sir."

I bade the tailor "Good day," and went towards the landing-place, followed by "Trick," the terrier, belonging to my landlord. There was a little crowd gathered to watch us off, and I found that the passengers,—among whom were three Catholic clergymen and two women,—were getting shaken into their places in the boat; so, with the dog in my arms I stepped in, and took my seat near the stern. The other boat had got well away nearly half-an-hour before, and was scudding across the channel under sail.

"Come, now, boys, hurry, or else they'll make Rathlin before we start! Come, now, Hughie, man, what're schamin' an' dramin' about! Take yer places, gentlemen, plaze, an' we'll be away. Is that your dog, sir? Go down, my bonny man! . . . Now Hughie! Away!"

As our boat glided away from Ballycastle into the channel which divides it from the Isle of Rathlin, the town's-folk, who had gathered upon the pier to see her off, shouted farewells to the boatmen of "Old Erin." "Good-bye, Archy!" "Good-bye, Hughie, dear!" "A fair wind

to yer wee boat, boys!" "A safe passage to ye, Hughie, darlin'!" "Good mornin' to yees, boys!" cried Hughie. "We'll be with yees again, safe and sound, this evening,—plaze God! Sure, we're all right wi' the clargy aboard. Good-bye!"

The sky was cloudless and the air was cool, and there was a fresh breeze, though not exactly in our favour. The tide had begun to run out at a tremendous rate before we left the shore; and we had to strike out southward, so as to fetch Church Bay, in Rathlin, which is the principal port of the island. The distance we had to go was between nine and ten miles. And we no sooner got clear of the shelter of the Irish shore than the boatmen began to feel the extraordinary force of the tide. Even in the calmest weather the tides are so irregular, and set down the channel with such force, that the mariner's difficulties are greatly increased in coasting by the Isle of Rathlin, where he has everything to contend with. An eminent writer says of this channel, "The channel between Rathlin and the mainland has, it is said, a strong resemblance to the Straits of Reggio, between Sicily and the coast of Calabria, particularly in the indenting of its shores, the velocity of its tides, and the vortices produced by counter currents. Like it, the water is frequently agitated and thrown into ridges and whirlings by the violence of the current, the particular direction of certain winds, and the irregular conformation of the coasts." Long before we reached mid-channel, we became sensible of the tremendous run of the water, and the wind being opposite to the tide, we met with a glorious tossing. The boatmen had a hard time of it, and they began to tug close

and silently at their oars ; but for the rest of us,—the day was so clear and beautiful, the agitated sea was so grand, the breeze was so refreshing, and the lively action of the boat, and altogether was so inspiring, that we,—I mean we who were not tugging at the oars,—we all enjoyed the thing very much, all of us except little Trick, the terrier, who blinked and shivered, and nuzzled close into the folds of my cloak every time the spray flew over us. . . . We were on the water-path of the ancient Dalraidic invaders, who peopled the isles and highlands of Scotland from the shores of Ulster. The island had a striking appearance as we saw it from the channel. It is about five miles long and one broad, and it is something like a boot in shape, the toe pointing to the Irish shore, at Ballycastle, the heel towards the Mull of Cantyre, in Scotland, and the top to the western ocean. There the little historic island stood, shining in the sun, before us, in the midst of a turbulent sea, and hemmed round by steep barriers of frowning rock, everywhere, except at Church Bay, the green harbour in front of us, to which we were making the best of our way. Church Bay is a great sweeping semicircle. Taken from the outermost points of its rocky wings, the landing-place is almost four miles inward, and until we got within the shelter of these wide-spread wings of the bay, the struggle of the boatmen with the tide was very great, and they laboured and perspired in silence, as if working for bare life. Old Archy seemed as if he was getting done up ; and one of the passengers took a spell at the oars to relieve him. The old man then went to the stern of the boat, and lifting up a loose board, he showed us that the boat was leaky, and

there was a considerable quantity of water in her, concealed by the boards under our feet. "There's nothing worse than that in her," said he, as he began to bale it out with a rusty tin can. "It'll make one man's work difference," continued he, as he laded away with his rusty can. "It'll make one man's work difference when that gets out." The passengers now began to see more of the difficulty the boatmen had to contend with, and two of the men held out a large rug by way of a sail, which helped the men a little, and then, a wild-eyed islander on his way home to Rathlin, and seemingly lost in dreamy thought, struck up a wailing Gaelic song, which he crooned as he gazed across the wide sea, apparently unconscious of all that was going on around; until my dog, Trick, began to howl an accompaniment, which set us all a-laughing. Even the boatmen, in spite of their great exertions, began to be a little more lively. Old Archy Weir was evidently looked upon by the crew as their skipper. He spoke to them with a tone of authority, and even Hugh MacKinley, who was part owner of the boat, obeyed him like a child. "Come now, boys, dear," cried he, with big drops rolling down his brown face, "Come now, boys, dear, tug the 'Old Erin' out of this! Pull away now! Hughie, faith yer not doing much; that oar o' yours is goin' in an' out like a knife! Pull away, my bonny men! Jerk her out o' this! We'll make Rathlin pier in good time yet,—plaze God. Come now, Hughie man, dear!" And old Hugh seemed to blush like a child reproved by his father, as he bent silently to his oars with redoubled will. There was one of the passengers, too, a Catholic clergyman, who did much to encourage the toiling

boatmen. Indeed, he kept us alive the whole way with an incessant flow of good spirits, and dry humour, which made the men laugh at their work, and drew out their mettle with a right good-will. He had caught the names of the boatmen, and, taking up the tone of Old Archy, the skipper, to the amusement of all on board, he cried, "Come now, Hughie, my bonnie man, don't be scatterin' talk! Faith, yer workin' too much with yer tongue, and too little with yer oars! Tug away, man alive, or we'll be down wi' the tide. Pull away now, my brave fellows! Crush her along, boys! Pull away now! Make her smoke! Come, Hughie, man, dear, are ye drammin' or schamin'? Don't ye see there all dyin' about ye? *Noo*, she's awa!" He said this in broad Scottish dialect. "*Noo* she's awa! Pull away now, my lucky lads. Faith, ye're doing it rightly now!" and thus, with a kind of dexterous geniality, he kept the boatmen cheerily to their work, and contributed no small pleasure to the charm of the trip across the channel that day. . . . As soon as we got within the outer clip of the headlands which terminate the wings of the bay, we were out of the drift of the tide; and the boatmen began to take it easy. All anxiety was over, and everybody seemed to be in high spirits. Even the terrier, Trick, came out from the folds of my cloak, and, with his fore-feet upon the edge of the boat, gazed with a mixture of wonder and satisfaction at the island we were approaching. The view of the bay, as we rowed along, was very fine. The shores are composed of steep crags of dark basalt, relieved, here and there, by bright limestone; and the play of light and shade upon the hues of these rocks was exquisite. At the head of the bay,

too, the green lands of the island began to show charmingly,—the sweet kernel of a rugged nut. Low down, by the shore, at the head of the bay, stands the Episcopal church of the island, from which the bay takes its name,—“Church Bay,” and near it is the residence of Mr. Gage, the rector, who is sole owner, and magistrate of the island, and well known as a kindly and hospitable gentleman. As we drew near the landing-place, a little crowd of island folk was waiting to welcome us. As soon as I got clear of the slippery landing-place, I stopped to look about me, and my first impression was that the country, inland, looked like a bit of Cumberland, in its cultivated parts. . . . And this is the wild isle of Rathlin, which has so often felt the fury of Danish, English, and Hebridean arms. This is the spot where St. Columba founded the famous monastery, which was desolated and destroyed, again and again, by the Danes. This is the spot to which Robert Bruce fled for shelter, when a heavy cloud lay upon his fortunes. Upon the summit of a savage crag, looking towards the Scottish coast, stand the mouldering ruins of the fortress which afforded him an asylum, and which still bears the name of the illustrious fugitive. This is the spot where the Campbells destroyed all the old women of the island by precipitation over the rocks, at a point still known by the name of *Sloc na Calleach*.



CHAPTER II.

Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.

THE TEMPEST.

S our tired boatmen rowed slowly up to the weedy landing-place, they were hailed again and again, by first one, then another of their friends amongst those who had come down to meet the boat. Judging from their garb, and general appearance, they were mostly seafaring folk; and perhaps the risky nature of the channel we had crossed had something to do with the warmth of our welcome to land. Besides, strangers are rare in that spot at any time, and are always received with great hospitality; but, on this occasion, an unusual number of the inhabitants had gathered about the shore to witness the extraordinary visitation which had crossed "Slunk-na-Marra" to the consecration of the chapel in their lonely isle that day. And then,—a bishop,—a bishop and his clergy had come over in the boats! It was a great day for Rathlin; and no wonder that the island was stirred to its centre by such a rare event. I could see these weather-beaten natives fluttering about in all directions; some crowding the little pier where we landed; some standing in knots, here and there, upon the rocks; and others lounging upon the road, which winds along the head of the bay,—their eyes all fixed upon the passengers, as they stepped ashore. I did not know a single soul in the island; but Michael

McOuig's hostelry was about half-a-mile from the landing-place; and I took the road thither, among a straggling company who were going to the same place. As I got further away from the shore, I was surprised to find that the island's wild girdle of rock concealed so much verdant beauty.

And now, before I enter old Michael's house I will say something about the island in general; and first, of its appearance from the sea. Rathlin is so hemmed in by steep headlands, and rocks of mixed basalt and limestone,—rich in colour, and fantastic in form,—that a sail round it affords a succession of impressive pictures. The whole coast of the island is remarkable for rocky wildness, but especially that part of it which is north-west of "Bruce's Castle," where it is strikingly grand. The rocks are not of very great height, but, rising as they do almost perpendicularly from the water, they look much loftier than they really are. The line of coast, too, is broken into wild amphitheatres, the bases of which are composed of immense masses of limestone, worn by the waves into all sorts of fantastic forms. Above the limestone the grass and earth appear; and, still higher, the dark basaltic rock. In the shores of the island there are numerous caves. The finest of these is "Bruce's Cave," situate a little north-west of the ruins of "Bruce's Castle." It rises at its entrance about seventy feet, and it is about fifty feet in depth. It is formed of noble arches of sombre basalt, resting in layers behind one another. It faces the northern ocean; and the sea which sets in on that part of the coast is tremendous. Rathlin is about nine miles from Ballycastle, on the Irish

coast. It is rather more than six miles long, and about one mile in average breadth ; and it contains something more than two thousand plantation acres of land. The inhabitants are employed in agriculture, fishing, and kelp-burning. They generally speak of Ireland as a foreign kingdom ; and they have very little communion with it, except what is necessary for the trade of the island. The form of Rathlin has been compared,—like Italy,—to that of a boot ; the toe pointing to the coal-works of Ballycastle ; the heel,—where “Bruce’s Castle” is situated,—to Cantyre, in Scotland ; and the top to the western ocean. Towards the middle, which lies opposite Ballycastle, it is bent in an angle,—the instep of the boot,—in which is “Church Bay,” the only good harbour in the island. Sir William Petty says that Rathlin resembles “an Irish stocking, the toe of which pointeth to the mainland.” The island contains several small mountains, the highest of which is 447 feet above the level of the sea, the lowest something less than 300 feet, and so precipitous are the cliffs which encircle the isle that, “from the vicinity of ‘Bruce’s Castle,’ round the whole northern shore, by the Bull Point to the church in Church Bay, the lowest point is 180 feet above the level of the sea, and the mean height may be said to be 300 feet.” The land in the valleys is rich and well cultivated. The western end of the island is the most craggy and mountainous part ; and its coast is quite destitute of harbours. On the contrary, the soil of the instep end is poor, the coast is more open, and has several little harbours ; hence the inhabitants of that part of Rathlin are fishermen, “and are accustomed to make short voyages and to barter.” At this end of the island there is a lake

of fresh water, rather more than a mile in circumference, and 104 feet above the level of the sea. At the opposite end there is another lake, called "Cligan," 238 feet above the level. In addition to these lakes, the island is well supplied with springs of fresh water,—of which it contains more than thirty,—the most remarkable of these is situate about a quarter of a mile north-west of "Bruce's Castle." The water of this well rises and falls with the tide, although it is about 100 feet above the level of the sea. Amongst the crags at the western end of the island, "a single native is known to fix his rope to a stake driven into the summit of a precipice, and from thence, alone and unassisted, to swing down the face of a rock in quest of the nests of sea-fowl." The inhabitants have had so little intercourse with strangers, that they retain many ancient peculiarities of speech and manners,—many wild legends and isolated prejudices; and the native Irish still continues to be a common language amongst them. With respect to the geology of the island, I glean the following particulars from the "Transactions of the Irish Academy":—

From the striking similarity existing between the Isle of Rathlin and the adjoining continent, it is the general opinion that this island had, at one period, formed part of the county of Antrim, from which it has been separated by some violent convulsion of nature.

Like the adjacent continent, its principal strata are limestone and basalt.

Along the north-eastern coast of Ireland, for a space of at least sixty miles, these strata everywhere present themselves,—in one place the limestone rises to a considerable height above the level of the sea, and in another gives place to the basalt. On the range

of cliffs running westward, and forming the northern boundary of Church Bay, in Rathlin, we see the limestone rising abruptly from the ocean, and forming a line of coast fantastically beautiful.

I was very much struck by the beautiful appearance of these cliffs, as we entered the bay.

At some period of time, Rathlin has been buried in the deep, and may have formerly united Staffa and the Giant's Causeway.

The basaltic pillar formation, of which the Causeway is the best known example, shows itself in this island in many peculiar arrangements. It seems that dense vapours sometimes accumulate over the waters of the channel which divides Rathlin from Ireland.

If the atmosphere be highly impregnated with these vapours, and dense exhalations not previously dispersed by the action of the winds or waves, or rarified by the sun, it then happens that in this vapour, as in a curtain extended along the channel for some height above the sea, the extraordinary phenomena called the *Fata Morgana* may be observed. . . . A belief was formerly prevalent among the inhabitants that a green island rises, every seventh year, out of the sea between Bengore and Rathlin. Many individuals they say, have distinctively seen it adorned with woods and lawns, and crowded with people selling yarn, and engaged in the common occupations of a fair. Could this have been the *Fata Morgana* ?

And now, after this brief sketch of the physical features of the island, for the particulars of which I am mainly indebted to the "Transactions of the Irish Academy," I will return to my own personal experience, whilst on the island.

After a leisurely walk from the landing-place, I came, with the terrier at my heels, to the one hostelry on the island ; and I found it a range of rude, low building, standing endways by the roadside, with some rough out-housing about it,

for farming purposes. The place was filled with brown-faced islanders, who had gathered there to see the visitors from Ireland, and to be present at the consecration; and, as each stranger presented himself, he was received by the company, and especially by the landlord, with a warmth of welcome highly characteristic of such a people, in such a place. Old Michael McOuig, the lame landlord, was unusually excited by the rare event of that day. He seemed to give away far more drink than he sold. But the time was drawing near for the consecration of the chapel, and, as I wished to see the ceremony, I put my dog into the care of old Michael; and when I had seen him lock it up in the stable, with many assurances that it would be quite safe there till my return, I took my way towards the chapel, which stood in a picturesque nook of the hill-side, overlooking Church Bay. From the time of the Reformation until the year 1832, the Catholics of this little isle, which stands, "as Neptune's Park, ribbed and paled in with rocks unscalable, and roaring waters," had worshipped God in a hollow on the mountain side; and the bishops of the diocese administered confirmation under the shadow of a limestone cliff. In the year 1832, an old deserted mill was procured, and there the Holy Sacrifice was offered up until the day of which I am writing. It seems that, for many years previous, this old mill had been sinking into ruin, and therefore the pastor of the island, Father Michael McCartan, "girding himself resolutely to the work,—by his own exertions, the sacrifices of his people, and the generosity of his friends,—had built one of the most beautiful little churches to be found in the

diocese of Down and Connor. To consecrate this church, Dr. Dorrian, the bishop of the diocese, accompanied by the Very Rev. Canon Keogh, of Ballybriggan, a large number of other clergy, and some of the most respectable of the Catholic laity of the contiguous parts of Ireland," crossed the waters on the day when it was my fortune to visit this singular spot.

The distance to the new chapel was about a mile. The road wound round the head of Church Bay, and, as it approached the chapel, it rose steeply, affording a fine view of the shore, and of the opposite coast of Ireland, where the stupendous mass of Fair Head rose sheer from the waters, almost perpendicular, to a height of nearly six hundred feet. I found the chapel in a secluded nook upon the hill-side ; and I was surprised to see such a numerous gathering of hardy, weather-beaten people there, whose lives were spent in farming this singular island, and fishing in the waters that lash its craggy shores. There were nearly two hundred people present,—a large part of the entire population of the island,—and, though bent age and poverty were visible, here and there, amongst the number, there was nothing like tatters nor squalor to be seen. I had bought a ticket of admission, in Ballycastle, before starting. Delivering this at the door, I took my seat a few minutes before the ceremony began ; feeling a little awkward, and out of place, on account of my ignorance of the observances of the service, which made me look singular, as well as feel so. In addition to this, I was a stranger in Rathlin, and I imagined that this gave rise to curious speculations as to what brought a person wholly unknown, and a Protestant,

across the water, to the consecration of the Catholic Church, in Rathlin, that day. The rapt earnestness of that simple congregation was remarkable. There was something very impressive in the whole of the service, even though it lacked the aid which music lends to the ceremonials of the Catholic Church. Perhaps the most striking part of the ceremony, to my mind, was the procession of the bishop and his clergy, in their robes, around the outside of the church, chanting. . . . When the consecration was over, the principal part of the congregation began to straggle off, in different directions. A few lingered about the place, absorbed in admiration of the building, which was evidently invested with a new interest to them, after the ceremony they had just witnessed. No inconsiderable number, however, wended their way from the spot, straight towards the hostelry whither I was going. . . . It was a great day for old Michael. His stabling was crowded with shaggy ponies ; and the house swarmed with people, from all parts of the island. He was in a state of extraordinary excitement ; for many old friends from remote nooks were there that day ; and, as he went limping in and out, with the perspiration glittering on his rugged face, he seized first one and then another, saying, " Come here, now ! Take a half-un wi' me now ! Here, Jemmy Dhu M'Curdy ! Come here, now, Jemmy Beg M'Curdy ! Angus Roe M'Curdy, come you ! Let's take half-uns a-piece, now ! " There were several strangers there, too, that day ; and, with characteristic hospitality, the old man,—indeed, everybody in the place,—paid no small kindly attention to these. Michael's wife had recently made him a present of a young

islander. A few friends and relatives were holding the christening feast in the bedroom where she lay; and nothing would serve but I must go in and drink to the health of his wife and child. After this he went with me to the stable to let the dog out; but, to my dismay, I found that the door had been opened, and the dog was gone. He immediately began to stump about the house in great trepidation, despatching scouts in search of the dog; and boatmen and fishers sallied forth; and seeing that I was a little concerned about the matter, they, one and all, assured me that the dog should *not* be lost. In about half-an-hour old Michael came in with "Trick" in his arms; and, as he set the dog down, he said, "Oh, see now, sur, if the little fellow had been left, by my saul, I would have sent it after you, rightly! Give me your hand, sur! Didn't I tell you we'd find the dog? Come on, here, now, an' take a half-un wi' me!" It was a singular scene in that island hostelry, "with ground for the floor." Fish and beef hung about the chimney, drying; large hanks of home-spun yarn festooned the walls; and on a rude shelf in the corner there was a number of home-made candles, with wicks of the pith of rushes. As the day advanced "the fun grew fast and furious." In one corner a company of wild-eyed islanders were singing Gaelic songs; in another, three or four fishermen were "discoorsin' on things consarnin' the ocean wide;" but the principal topic of conversation amongst the company was the visit of "the clargy," and the consecration which had taken place that day. As the time for our return drew near the boatmen went out to see the state of the tide, returning soon after with news that we should not be able to leave the island

until about nine o'clock next morning ; and, after I had arranged with old Michael for a bed in the house, I went out, in the cool of the evening, to visit the ruins of "Bruce's Castle," about two miles off.

Bruce's Castle is now the principal relic of antiquity upon the Isle of Rathlin. According to tradition this fortress was first built by the Danes, who ruled the inhabitants of the island with great tyranny, until they effected their deliverance in the following manner : Being compelled by their fierce conquerors to furnish straw, fuel, and other necessities for the use of the castle, they were, at last, so goaded by the cruelty of their oppressors, that they contrived to conceal in each *creel* a native of the island, armed with a *skein*, or dagger,—who, during the night, issued from their hiding-places and killed the guard ; and, having admitted the enraged inhabitants from without, they put the whole of the garrison to the sword. And thus ended the domination of the Danes in the Isle of Rathlin. Near the ruin there is a remarkable natural cavern, called "Bruce's Cave," which tradition points out as a place of retreat used by the Scottish king. In the gloomy recesses of the same cavern, in the year 1797, every male adult in Rathlin, except the parish priest and another gentleman, took the test of a "United Irishman." Adjoining this cavern there is a small haven, called "Port-na-Sassanach ;" and near the same place a field of battle is pointed out, called "The English Grave." A battle is said to have been fought in 1551-2, when an English army landed there, and was routed by the McDonnells. During his exile in the Isle of Rathlin, Robert Bruce was accompanied by several of his principal

adherents, amongst whom were Sir Robert Boyd, Sir James Douglas, commonly called "Sir James the Good," and Angus McDonnell, sixth king of the Isles,—of whose dominion Rathlin was then a part.

Early in the spring of 1307 Angus McDonnell returned from Rathlin to Kintyre, in Scotland, to circulate a report of the death of Bruce, and also to draw secretly together a body of troops, ready to act, when occasion might require, on behalf of his illustrious friend. Soon after that Sir James Douglas and Sir Robert Boyd also took leave of Bruce and departed for Arran, where they effected their landing in safety. Ten days after they were followed by Bruce, who, receiving by his spies favourable intelligence from the mainland, landed at Turnberry, in Carrick, and, with three hundred followers, cut to pieces a body of English quartered in that neighbourhood. However, soon after, succours arriving to his enemies, he was obliged to seek shelter in the wilds of Carrick, the patrimonial country of his family.

Such is the story history tells of the connection of the Scottish king with the Isle of Rathlin, to which he fled during the civil wars which devastated his kingdom after the appointment of Baliol to the throne by Edward of England. The ruins of the castle stand on the summit of a bold headland, at the eastern end of the island, immediately fronting Cantyre, in Scotland. The height of the rock upon which the ruins stand is about eighty feet. It rises perpendicularly from the water, which makes its height seem much greater ; and, about fifty feet from its eastern extremity, a gloomy chasm almost insulates the mass upon which the outer part of the fortress was situated. Upon the rock itself, all that is left of the fortress, now, is a massive fragment of the walls, of great thickness ; but about one hundred feet on the western side of the chasm, the remains

of another part of the building are visible, which show that the castle has been of much greater extent than the walls now standing upon the rock would suggest. It is a singularly wild scene. The cry of the sea-mew, the croak of the cormorant, and the roar of the sea in the dark chasm below the ruin, were the only sounds which broke the silence around.

The shades of night were sinking on land and sea, when I stood upon the narrow ridge which connects the rock with the mainland, gazing up to the ruins which once sheltered Scotland's exiled king. The scene around that savage crag looked gloomily-wild, in the autumn twilight. There, low down by the beach, on the right hand of the ruins, was the cave, still associated with the name of the royal exile. Near that cave, too, was "Port-na-Sassanach,"—the landing-place of the English who fell beneath the swords of the McDonnells in 1551, and were buried near the same spot, in a place still pointed out as "The Grave of the English." On the west, divided from the island by the wild waters of "Slunk-na-marra," lay the Irish shore, with the dark mass of "Fairhead" rising, steeply, six hundred feet from the sea. On the east, the coast of Cantyre was in full view; and the hills of Scotland loomed grandly in the background,—those blue hills towards which the Scottish king has often gazed with thoughtful eye, and throbbing heart, during his exile in this lonely sea-nest.

I had found it a rough walk from old Michael's up to "Bruce's Castle," though the distance was only two miles and a half. When I came to the mountain land which slopes up to the ruins, the way grew wilder at every step,

and I scrambled among wandering sheep-tracks,—tangled, and rocky, and sometimes scarcely perceptible to the eye. But, as I floundered along, I chanced to spy a farm-house, in a sheltered nook of the mountain side, and, making as straight as I could to the spot, I there inquired for the path. The mistress of the house came to the door of her rude sheiling,—for though a farm-house, it was only a small, thatched building, of one storey, and of the simplest construction,—she came to the door, and, pointing out the shortest route, she gave me the best directions she could, in a kind of Scottish dialect, which is the ordinary language of these islanders, except when speaking to one another, when they commonly use the Gaelic tongue. Day was fast declining, so I lost no time in striking up the hill-side again, in the direction she had indicated. I had not gone far before I became aware of the presence of a barefooted lad, who was hovering about in the rearward of my track. This was the farmer's son, whom his mother had sent to take care that I did not lose my way. I called to him, and the little fellow smiled, but he still kept shyly in the rear, though always within sight. I made my way up to the ruins without further guidance, and I had lingered about the spot till I had almost forgot that the lad was in the neighbourhood ; but, when I turned to leave the place, the shades of night had so shrouded the landscape that I was glad to call him to my assistance. The little fellow evidently knew that this would be the case, for he came to my call at once ; and though I could scarcely get an intelligible word from him, he immediately took the way before me down the hill-side, which was so tortuous,

so broken, and so obscured by the deepening gloom, that he had to lead me by the hand. At last we saw a glimmering light, in a dark hollow, and the lad led me by a winding footpath, into a sheltered dell, where stood the farmstead from which he had followed me up to the ruins. The lad's mother met us at the door, kindly inviting me to enter. The islander's family was all gathered about the homely hearth, upon which there was a bright turf fire, filling the room with a cheerful glow. In front of the fire, oaten cakes were reared on edge, baking; and over it hung a large pan, full of oatmeal porridge. There was a general murmur of welcome as I entered the place; and they all made way for me to take the best seat by the fire; and not one of them would sit down till I had taken it. The inmates consisted of the father,—a tall, grey-haired man, of hard, weather-beaten appearance; the mother,—a kindly-looking, sonsie body, about fifty years of age; the eldest son,—a square-built, dark-eyed young fellow, about twenty-five; a strapping, bare-footed lass, about eighteen,—their only daughter,—and the lad who had been my guide. The mother whispered to her daughter, and then the girl brought a bowl of milk, which she set down upon a stool by my side. As soon as all were seated again,—except the daughter, who stood shyly in the background,—the mother began to stir the oatmeal porridge, stopping, now and then, to turn the cakes in front of the fire, meanwhile saying a few words in Gaelic, by fits, to my little bare-legged guide, who answered her timidly, in the same tongue. The furniture was of the simplest kind, but it was clean, and seemed sufficient, and quite in harmony with the general character

of the place. A rude delf-rack, filled with clean earthenware, occupied one side of the wall, close by the little window which lighted the room. Beneath the rack stood a rough, unpainted deal table, upon which bowls of milk were set, ready for the supper. Two well-worn oak chairs,—which looked like heir-looms,—mended and stayed, here and there, to keep them together, stood, one on each side of the fire. There was a rude bench, about five feet in length, and three low stools, all well polished by long usage. In one corner there was an antique spinning-wheel ; in another, a few farming tools were reared ; and against the wall hung nets and other fishing tackle. The land at this end of the island is so poor that the farmers are almost all fishermen. Among the open rafters,—which were quite black with smoke,—I could see the rude staves and other lumber stowed away. . . . After half-an-hour's chat with the old couple, I got up to go. The farmer's eldest son rose from his seat also, and, after saying a few words in Gaelic to his father, he offered to accompany me as far as McOuig's, for which I was thankful. The distance between us and the high road was rough, and almost trackless ; the night being, by this time, "as dark as a fox's mouth," although a patch of sky, here and there, was clear and starry. Few words passed between us, as we went our way that night ; and the moan of the sea on Rathlin's rocky shore came wild upon the ear.



CHAPTER III.

The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter.

BURNS.

LD Michael's hostelry was crowded; and, by this time, it had become a scene of bewildering excitement. The crews of the two boats were there. Many people from distant parts of the island had lingered amongst the strangers who had crossed the water that day; and the majority of the company seemed triumphant over the ills of life,—for that night. It was “a red-letter day” with the islanders of Rathlin. Many of them were fishermen; and they had all, more or less of a sea-look. Their hospitality to the strangers present was unbounded. I stayed inside a while listening to talk that was only half intelligible to me, and to sounds of revelry that “made the girdle ring;” and then I went forth to shake the din out of my ears, and to breathe a fresher air. It was a fine night, and the sky was cloudless. Under the window, outside, and upon the hedge-side, opposite, I found several of the islanders,—for whom there was no room inside,—carousing in the starlight. Some of them were considering where they were to sleep, for the inn was full, and the outhouses were already partly occupied by somnolent wassailers.

It was nearly midnight when old Michael showed me into a room, on the ground floor, in which he had reserved a bed for me. This room was next the one in which the main

body of the company were still lingering at their cups. It was partly a bedroom and partly a storeroom, and it had evidently been used as a drinking room that day. Pots and glasses stood here and there, and rings of whisky were visible upon the round table. It had a damp and dingy appearance, and the floor was the bare earth. There were two beds in the room, ranging end to end, along one side of the walls. In one of them a drunken fisherman had taken up his quarters,—and was snoring with might and main. I crept into the other bed, but sleep was out of the question; and I lay awake half the night listening to boatmen and fishers crooning Gaelic wails in the adjoining room. About two hours after I retired the drunken fisher in the other bed was joined by a second,—in the same condition. He came muttering into the room, in the dark; and, as he groped his way towards his comrade, he chanced to lay hold of the unhinged door of an old wardrobe, which came clattering to the ground with a terrible din. . . . About four in the morning, when the noise in the next room had died out, I heard somebody shaking at the door of that room, and beseeching old Michael to let him in. This went on for some time, but the houseless wretch getting no reply he went away, and for a while all was still. After this I sank into a kind of half-conscious doze, from which, however, I was soon startled again. The room was lighted by one window,—which was opposite to my bed. I was awakened by some one lifting the lower half of this window from the outside, and then the dark figure of a man, pushing himself through, intervened between me and the dawn, which had just begun to tinge the room with a faint light. “Hollo!”

said I ; " who's there ? " and in an instant the figure drew back, and down went the window again,—with a clash. This, no doubt, was the same man who had been trying to get in at the front door. After this I slept a broken sleep for about two hours, and then turned out,—as the household were beginning to stir.

The moment the house door was opened, lounging islanders began to creep out of the corners in which they had passed the night. Some came from the out-houses ; some from the fields ; and some gathered up their limbs from wood benches, and shook themselves. Come from where they would, they all seemed ready for their " morning,"—as they call the first dram of the day. Old Michael was early astir. He did not seem much soberer for his night's rest ; and his first cry to the strangers in the house was, as before, " Just take a half-un wi' me, now ! " The crew of the " Old Erin " began to muster about seven, in the room where I had slept, where we breakfasted together on tea, ship biscuits, sweet island butter, and hard-boiled eggs. When I had finished breakfast, it wanted an hour and a half to our starting-time ; so I turned to look at the island. It was a glorious morning ! Several of the Catholic clergymen were wandering about ; and, in a quiet part of the road, I saw the bishop himself, pacing contemplatively to and fro, with an open book in his hand, apart from his clergy, who seemed to hold themselves reverently aloof from their pastor, in his " inclosed hour." Old Michael was in the same state of good nature as on the night before. I asked him what I had to pay. " Hut, tut, man," said he. " Never name it mair ! But, what the deil,

ye've had naething ! Haud your tongue, now ; an' jist tak' a roozer wi' me,—bi' way o' *deochan durrish* ! Pay is it ? Hut, man, alive,—what, we're no to a bite an' a sup ! Deil's be in it,—an' you a stranger too ! Houts,—pay,—no, faith ! The best thing ye can do is jist to lave the island without sayin' a word about the matter,—especially to the wife, yon ! Come here now ! Here's wishing ye a safe passage across the channel ! an' bright good luck to ye wherever ye go !”

. . . It was a lovely morning. The sky was cloudless ; and a refreshing breeze swept across the island from the north-west. The highway, which passes the end of the inn, commands a fair view of a large tract of cultivated land, in the interior ; and, for an hour and a half, I paced to and fro upon that elevated path, delighted with the scene, and regretting that my brief stay did not afford a better acquaintance with the “qualities of the isle,” and the life upon it, which is so strongly imbued with the peculiarities of a strange insulation.

And now, before I take leave of the place, I will give another glance at its physical features, and its traditions.

The quality of the soil, taken altogether, is very good ; and the crops are often above the average. The potato grows well there ; and the pasturage ground is extensive, in proportion to the area of the isle. Whilst sailing along the base of the cliffs in Church Bay, plots of healthy-looking potato are visible, here and there, among the masses of rock which have fallen from the precipices. These plots,—relieving the crags with verdant beauty,—are often in places which seem almost inaccessible. The climate is little different to that of the mainland, except that, in winter, there is less

snow upon the island, and the weather is generally milder there than upon the mainland. Fogs, however, are very prevalent in Rathlin, especially in spring and autumn; and these fogs are sometimes so dense as to render the island completely invisible, even at a short distance. Hence vessels were often exposed to great danger in approaching this rocky isle, before the two lighthouses were erected upon it; and shipwrecks, from which none survived to tell the tale, frequently took place upon its shores. . . . Rathlin is rich in historic traditions,—apart from the story of Bruce's connection with the isle. About the beginning of the fifth century, St. Comgall landed there, but was seized and driven out of the island. Subsequently, St. Columba, the famous missionary,—“after being tossed for three hours upon the whirlpool called *Cluagh-na-muire*,”—landed in Rathlin, and founded a religious house there, which flourished for nearly three centuries, in peace, until the end of the eighth century, when (as Dr. Hamilton says) “the northern storm, filling at once the whole horizon, and bursting impetuously from the ocean, overwhelmed the island, burying in blind and brutal destruction the inoffensive ministers of the Christian religion.” In 790, the monastery established by St. Columba was ravaged by the Danes; and it was again ravaged and ruined by them in 973, when they put the abbot to death. In times past, the vicinity of Rathlin to Ireland rendering it an important ground of occupation for an invading army, it became the scene of fierce contention between the inhabitants of the opposite coasts of Ireland and Scotland. The memory of a massacre, perpetrated by the Campbells, a highland clan, is still preserved; and a

place called *Sloch-na-Colleach* perpetuates a tradition of the destruction of all the old women on the island, by precipitation over the rocks. Dr. Hamilton says,

The remembrance of this horrid deed remains so strongly impressed on the minds of the inhabitants, that no person of the name of Campbell is allowed to settle on the island.

The following passage from "The Annals of the Four Masters," relates to the battle already mentioned, in which the English invaders, in the sixteenth century, were utterly destroyed, and were all "in one red burial blent," at the spot known as "The Grave of the English," near the ruins of "Bruce's Castle :

In 1551, the Lord Chief Justice (Anthony Saint Leger) marched at the head of an army into Ulster, and despatched the crews of four ships to the island of Rathlin to plunder it. James and Colla, the two sons of McDonnell, of Scotland, were on the island to defend it. A battle ensued, which ended in the total defeat of the English, not one of whom survived, excepting the lieutenant who commanded them on this excursion.

In 1558, the Scots took possession of the island, but were soon expelled, with dreadful slaughter, by the Lord Deputy Sussex, who seized upon it for the English crown. In 1575, General Morris landed here with a body of men from Carrickfergus, and, having killed 240 of the inhabitants, seized the castle. In consequence of successive barbarities committed upon the inhabitants by various savage invaders, during the unsettled ages of Ireland, this island became at length totally uninhabited, in which state it is represented in a manuscript of the country so late as 1580, now in the hands of the McDonnells ; and it is further stated that

some highlanders, who fled to it for safety during that period, were forced to feed on colt's flesh for want of other provisions. Such, briefly told, is the story of Rathlin's isle, in the days of the iron hand.

A few minutes before nine, I walked down to the pier. The passengers were nearly all mustered; for I fancy that most of them were afraid of being left upon the island. We were all ready for starting, except one man who had run back to the inn for his umbrella; and as soon as he came in sight, old Archy cried out, "Now, gentlemen, we're a little late, and the tide is running very strong. But we'll get across yet, wi' the help o' Providence!" In two or three minutes more, the boat pushed off; and the boatmen stretched to their oars, as if conscious there was no time to lose. The little church and the rectory, with its garden and plantation, lessened behind us, and the beautiful crags of the bay glided swiftly by. The boat containing the bishop, and the principal part of the clergy, had started before us, and was now considerably ahead. As we drew near the open channel, the force of the tide became visible to everybody in the boat, and the rowers bent to their work with a will. "Pull now, boys! Pull Hughie! Pull Archy!" We were now about four miles from the head of Church Bay, and every boat's length brought us further into the tremendous pull of the stream. The men were struggling with might and main. At last old Archy cried, "It's no use, boys! We may as well turn back soon as late. We cannot do it!" Just then the boat ahead of us, which was better manned than ours, turned back, and making towards us, they cried out, "Turn back! Turn back! Make for Ushat!" Ushat was a

rude fishing port near the north-east end of the island, and much nearer the spot where we then were than the head of Church Bay was. Our boatmen turned back at once, and, keeping in shore to avoid the run of the stream, they struck up towards Ushat, in the teeth of the tide, and amongst masses of seaweed and sunken rocks, which increased the danger considerably. It became necessary to keep a sharp look-out ahead. Nothing was heard in the boat now but the voice of the man at the bow. "Keep her off, boys! Keep her off! In again! Now, pull! Keep her off! Keep her off,—quick! Pull now, my bonny men! Pull for your lives, or we shall be carried out again!" And they *did* pull. "Now we have it, boys!" said old Archy, with the perspiration running down his face. "Now we have it,—wi' the help o' God! Now she goes!" And so, by great exertion, our boatmen made the little port of Ushat at last. Old Archy told us that we should have to stop there two hours till the tide slackened, and so we all went ashore, clambering over weed-covered rocks, from which we slipped into the water now and then. It was a wild and barren scene. There was nothing in sight upon the Ushat shore but weedy sea-worn rocks and the little bleak hills which shut out the landward scene. But on the opposite side of the channel the Irish shore was in full view in all its wild beauty. The crews and passengers of the two boats now began to squander,—some to gather limpets, and eat them; some to bathe in retired nooks amongst the rocks; others to wander about the bleak hill side. Old Archy announced to the passengers that there was a "dwell-house" a little way from the landing-place. It was the

only building of the kind at Ushat ; and it certainly was a poor rude hut of a place, where all we could get was a drink of water. There was a lad in the house who had a tame hawk and a sea urchin, which he wanted to sell some of the passengers. The priest of the island, seeing the boats turn back, had walked over the hill to meet his friends again. The two hours sped by, even in that wild nook of the isle ; and the boats put to sea once more ; the best boat, with the bishop on board, leading the way, as before. As soon as our boat got well off the shore we hoisted sail, and struck out to the north-west, so as to get back with the run of the tide, along the Irish shore, to Ballycastle. But the sail was soon taken down again, and the boatmen had to struggle once more with the fierce tug of the tide. The Catholic clergyman who had so much cheered their labours with his humorous geniality as we crossed over to the island now began to enliven them with the same strain. "Now, my bonny men !" cried he ; "come, Hughie, now ! Crush her along, my lucky lads ! Switch her through it !" Then one of the oar-pins broke, and old Hughie, half-despairing, said he shouldn't wonder if we had to pass the night on Rathlin again yet. Two of the clergymen stripped their coats and took a spell at the oar to relieve the boatmen. The sky became overcast, and the wind rose, and there was a hard struggle to make a point below Ballycastle, so as to pull back to the pier, under shelter of the shore, through comparatively quiet water. The other boat landed two hours before ; and, having seen our difficulty, they came out to tow us in. But the boatmen of the "Old Erin" had fought so near home that they were

determined to finish the trip without assistance; and we landed, all safe, at Ballycastle pier, at five in the afternoon.

I stayed in Ballycastle about three hours; after which I had a glorious ride of eighteen miles to Portrush by the light of the moon.





A Cold Morning.

(ON THE COAST ROAD.)

'Tis bitter cold ; for this relief, much thanks.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE fear of sleeping too long made my slumbers fitful, and I was out of bed by three in the morning. "Night's candles" were not quite burnt out, and the waning light of the moon mingled with the grey tinge of dawn. All was silent except the murmur of the tide, surging along the beach, within a few yards of my window. Earth and sky, the long strand, the sand hills, the craggy headlands, and the little town, all,—except the lonely sea,—was silent and still, and clear and fresh, as if it was the first morning of a new-created world. . . . As I crept softly down stairs, for fear of awaking the household, the cheerful aroma of hot coffee met me half way. There was a bright fire in the kitchen. The servant had been up an hour, and my breakfast was ready. As I sat by the new-lit fire, sipping my coffee, the old clock upon the stair-head struck four in a solemn tone, and the sound seemed to rush into every nook and cranny of the house. There was no other sound astir, except the chirp of one strong cricket,

and the timid jingle of my spoon against the cup ; for I felt almost afraid to move anything, lest I should disturb the silence which lay on all around, like a spell. The last stroke had hardly died away, when the solitary rattle of a pair of wheels came up the road, and stopped at the door of my lodging.

“That’s the car, sir,” said the servant, as she quietly laid the coffee-pot down. She spoke in a soft undertone, quite unlike the voice with which she cleaved through the busy sounds that fill the air of noonday. She spoke as if the silence was peopled with something unearthly, which she was afraid to waken. . . . A knock came to the door. It was the driver. I took a parting gulp of the coffee, whipped my cape over my shoulders, donned a white hat, and went out, followed by the terrier, “Trick,” whose barking rang loud and clear all over the town, and seemed to fill the unoccupied ear of morning with an untimely activity.

It was “a nipping and an eager air,” and I was cold. The driver looked very cold, for he seemed to shrink into the woollen tie which swathed his throat, and his pinched nose was red and raw ; and the whip in his hand gave a shiver now and then, as if it needed a drop of something warm to waken it up to the business of the day. The car, too, had a chill and shrivelled appearance,—it was evidently much less than it would have been at noontide ; and the horse looked as if it had been sleeping in a windy field all night, with the gate open. The very pavement was starved, and still,—like an old woman, waiting for relief at the door of a parish office, on a wintry day. The streets, the houses,

the pale blue sky, the waning moon, and the world altogether, seemed as if it had just stepped out of a cold bath, and was waiting to be rubbed down with a rough towel. I heard the teeth of the morning chattering in its head. The moan of the sea had a shiver in it; and old Dan, who was usually so genial, sat upon the car as stiff as a mummy, three thousand years old. Nothing on earth seemed to have much life in it that morning, except the Skye terrier, and even that little bunch of indestructible animation, whose progenitors had wintered with the hawk and fox, far away in the cold mountains of the north, looked as if it had been begotten by an icicle out of a snowdrift. I shrunk up, as I drew my cape about me, and looked around; but I was, nevertheless, pleased at heart; for it was, indeed, a lovely morning,—of the kind. None of us had much to say. It was not only too chill, and too soon in the day, but there was something in the fine repose of the scene that seemed to warn us not to disturb its beauty by any impertinent gabble. . . . As the driver sat upon his seat, gazing, with petrified eyes, at his starved horse,—which stood as still as if every hair of its tail was cut in stone,—he looked as if the elements of which he was composed had been put together in a cold state, and would certainly fall asunder if ever that drab coat of his came unbuttoned. Dan was “hunched” into the smallest possible compass, in one corner of the car. His old limbs had crept close together to keep one another warm. He was wrapt in a strong blue overcoat, and he had a thick muffler round his neck, and a heavy rug tucked in about his legs. He bade me “Good morning,” and we shook hands,—like two marble

statues saluting. And then his old eyes tried to look lively from under the sheltering bushes of grey hair, beneath which they seemed to have crept as far as possible out of the cold. But it was no use. Nature would not be cajoled ; and the old man's unthawed constitution entered a quiet protest against doing anything warm at such a chill and untimely hour. His heart had not taken down its shutters for the day ; and even the tone of his voice had a cold sound,—like a frosty wind whistling through leafless thorns. Without preamble, we lapsed into a dead silence, and when I got up to my seat, I felt as stiff as a pair of rusty compasses which had been left in the rain for a week. The petrified driver woke up his frozen horse with a touch of the starved whip. The chill car started ; and away we went out at the end of the cold town, like three dead fish, packed up in ice, for a distant market. The rattle of the wheels sounded strange with all that world of silence to play in ; and the old car seemed ashamed of the noise it was making,—like a man startled by the din of his own footsteps in the stillness of an empty church. . . . In that quiet morning hour, many a trifling thing caught the eye, which would have been passed unobserved when the senses were crowded with the importunate activities of noonday ;—the bits of stone on the road, knocked hither and thither by horses' feet ; the little pools of water left by the rain ; the piece of torn newspaper, which I saw "Trick" worrying with such wild delight, as it drifted about in the wind, the day before ; the driblets of hay, where carts had stopped ; the sugary dust, and fragments of pack-thread, and tea paper, and raisin-stalks, and mealy sweepings, in front of the grocer's shop ; the mussel-

shells, thrown out from cottage doors, after last night's supper; the broken pipe, dropped by a lounging carter; and the fag-end of a cigar, flung away by some careless swell as he sauntered along; the crushed mouse, run over by a cart-wheel; the dead leaves, trailing weirdly in the wind; the bits of turf, and splinters of bog-fir, where a load of firing had been emptied; the picked fish-fins; aye, even the very wheel-ruts, and prints of horses' feet upon the road,—which garish noon would have drowned in obscurity,—had now a chance of asserting their presence; and each little pebble seemed to look up, and say, "*Now*, don't you see me? Am I not something, also? Ask me questions, and I can put you to the riddle of the universe; for I am older than you dream of."

As that grey morning dawned upon the unawakened world, our cold car rattled out at the end of the cold town; and the sound filled all the silent street,—like a pebble rolling in an empty barrel. We passed "Jolly Ned's" public, "where drouthy neebors meet;" we passed the whitewashed house, with the verandah in front, where the old gentleman lives who owns the fishery; we passed the little white cottage, where the washerwoman lives; we passed the house that is "To Let," at ten pounds a year; and the cottage where the smiling car-man dwells, who always "laves it to your honour;" we passed the house where the windows are so thronged with pretty faces, in the day-time, that they look like beds of flowers; and we passed the old iron pump, where bare-footed lasses stand in tattling clusters, waiting their turns to get water; and then the houses began to trickle away in twos and threes, till we

came to the sandy road, which leads down to "The Long Strand." A few yards farther on, we passed the pretty Catholic chapel, with its school, and priest's house, in enclosed ground; and a little beyond that, the tiny gas-works,—the last building of all,—which seemed to hang on the rest, like a drop at the cold nose-end of the town. And now we were out among the open green country.

Our way led between low hedgerows; and sea and land lay open to view; except that a straggling ridge of grassy knolls shut from sight "The Long Strand," which is such a fine wandering ground for the people of the town. There was a strange charm upon all the scene that morning. The moon was paling her soft radiance before the coming light of day, as she set beyond the wide sea; and the murmur of the tide, which came over the sand-hills, harmonised well with the contemplative beauty of that spell-bound dawn.





Wreck Ashore.

All lost ; to prayers, to prayers ; all lost.

THE TEMPEST.

I WAS at the Giant's Causeway, in the North of Ireland, in October, 1869, when the *Cambria* was wrecked upon the rocks at Inistrahull, a dangerous island off the coast of Donegal, and directly in the way of vessels rounding Cape Malin for Glasgow or Liverpool. Up to the middle of the month our autumn had been beautiful as an Indian summer ; but about that time the long-continued fine weather broke up, and a storm arose, which lasted several days. The wind blew with great violence from the north and north-west, and the coast of Antrim looked fearfully grand, with the furious Atlantic breaking against its dark rocks and frowning headlands. The Causeway Hotel, where I was staying, stands near the edge of the cliffs, within a stone's throw of the sea. On the night of the 20th I sat up late listening to the tempest outside, which swept by the house with such fury that it was impossible to keep the feet upon open ground ; and when I went to bed I fell asleep with the roar of the waves in my ears. I slept longer than usual, and next morning I

was startled by a loud knock at my chamber door. "Aren't you getting up? The Cambria has gone to pieces upon the rocks at Inistrahull, and the coast below here is covered with wreck. All hands lost, except one man, out of nearly two hundred passengers and crew." I rose in haste, and looked through my window, from which I could see the strand at Black Rock, about a quarter of a mile from the hotel. The sea was still in angry mood, and great white waves were breaking upon the rocks at Bush Foot,—that is, the place where the salmon stream called "The Bush" runs into the sea. The sky was covered with wild driving clouds, and the distant mountains of Inishone were shrouded in angry gloom, all indicating that the tempest was not over; and the little strand, where seldom any foot prints itself, unless some stray fisherman from the village of Ballintray saunters along the edge of the tide, with rod on shoulder, or Sir Edmund's herd-boy lounges across it in the rearward of his wandering kye,—as careless and as lazy as they,—upon the strand I could see strange figures hovering about the white fringe of the waves on the look out for wreck. The sand-hills, too, which overlook the beach, and are usually so lonely, were dotted with people; and carts were hurrying up from the shore, laden with broken spars, and splinters of chests, and cabin furniture. There seemed to be an unusual and a fearfully eager stir all over the gloomy scene on that stormy October morning,—like the gathering of birds of prey about the dead. I dressed in a hurry, and sallied forth. There was an ominous flutter about the little hamlet, at the foot of the slope; and, as I went down towards the strand, I met cart after

cart returning from the sea laden with wreck. They had been at work all night ; and so, indeed, had many of the cotters who dwell near the shore. The way I went was scattered with sandy, sea-washed fragments, full of fearful import, dropt from the carts as they hurried along in the night time ; and, here and there, at a cottage door, a pile of splinters stood, gathered for firewood. Of course, anything of greater value would not be thus ostentatiously displayed, but spirited away as soon as possible, or, perhaps, buried in the sand till a more convenient time. . . . The tourist season was over ; and sometimes, for days together, not a single visitor came to this stormy corner of the Green Isle, to see its far-famed Giant's Causeway. Nooks of the shore, which in summer were trodden by the wandering feet of a ceaseless run of sightseers, were silent now. Nature had the scene to herself again ; and

Day and night and day went by,
Yet came no touch of human sound.

The boatmen were resting on their oars for the winter ; the sea rolled in and out of the caves in lonely grandeur ; the wild bird brooded peacefully in his nest among the crags ; and the guides, and old women, and children, who gather a thin living in summer by selling "specimens" and photographs to the visitors, had begun their usual period of hybernation, when the wreck of the Cambria woke the slumbering country-side into sudden activity. From the beginning of the storm some of these had been on the alert ; but as soon as evidences of wreck began to come ashore, there was not much rest among the needy dwellers by the

sea. This wild coast has seen many such disasters as the wreck of the Cambria. There is an old rhyme here which seems to indicate this :—

Tonduff wives, it's time to rise ;
The Aird folks up afore ye ;
To get a divide o' what comes wi' the tide,
An' then we'll ha' brochan galore.

“Tonduff” and “The Aird” are hamlets within two miles of the shore, and “brochan” is stirabout, or oatmeal porridge. . . . The strand at Black Rock was a curious scene when I got down that morning. I learnt that it had been more so through the night ; but the “boys” had almost all gone away, and those left hovering upon the edge of the tide were mostly women and children, with their little piles of salvage set apart upon the sand,—at least such part of it as they cared to display. Some of these people I knew by name. Connaught Mary was there,—a little, round-faced old woman, evidently of the ancient Milesian race. A kindly, simple hearted old soul she was, and as poor as a crow. In the night-time old Mary had seized a full barrel, washed in by the tide, and then,—but I had better let her speak for herself,—“An' then,” said she, “I got some o' the boys to roll it up into a corner o' the mountain for me ; an' what d'ye think, but whin I went to look for the barrel at brake o' day, bi jabers, it was gone entirely ! Och, why did they do that on me ? Sure, I wouldn't begridge them o' a share o' it,—the crayturs,—so I wouldn't ; but it's too bad entirely to put me out of it altogether. . . . I wonder was it apples, or was it butter,” she said, gazing at the place

where the barrel had been hid. "Ochone!" continued she, "but this world's a quare place. Glory be to God! Bad luck to them that did me out o' the barrel! Sure, ne'er a one o' them that couldn't spare it better nor me. . . . Wait, now, till I give ye a pinch out o' the box. . . . Och, weirasthrue! but every bone o' me aches wi' the cold. Sorrow bite or sup crossed my lips since I came down to the shore; and them beyant there aitin' and drinkin' o' the best all night, and never asked had I a mouth an me. Och, och, but this is a quare world entirely." Poor old Mary; the barrel was gone that would have "put her over the winter so well," as she said. I am sure that there was neither hardness of heart nor dishonesty in her nature; indeed, I know that she was sincerely touched by the mournful nature of the occasion; but the laws of "flotsam" and "jetsam" were a sealed book to her; and though she, like the rest of those engaged in the same way, had a kind of vague fear of the "water-guard," yet the general tone of their thoughts in relation to the ownership of wreck is sufficiently expressed in the old proverb, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." Mary was a fair sample of those I found prowling about the water that wild morning. Some of them were reticent, saying little, but pointing to their own pile of chips and crushed apples upon the sand. Others, however, were a little more communicative. One poor woman, who was far apart from the rest, rooting among the mass of sea-weed brought in by the tide, whispered to me that she had picked up a considerable quantity of male attire, of a fine kind, and in good condition; and I heard rumours that writing desks and strange valuables had been

recovered from the water during the night. Much of this, however, may have had an imaginative origin.

I learnt from some of the people on the strand that several boats had been out ranging the waters between there and Inistrahull in search of salvage ; and that great numbers of barrels of flour, and fruit, and much other floating wreck, had been met with ; and some of the boats had returned heavily laden with spoil. Of course each change of wind and tide would drift this flotant mass in a new direction ; and the Hebridean isles must have seen a good deal of the wreck of the *Cambria*. What I saw in this nook of the shore was only part of what happened along this coast for many miles. From the *Belfast News* of the 26th I quote the following :—

An immense amount of wreckage has been picked up along the Portrush coast. The port bow of a lifeboat, painted white, with "Glasgow" in red letters on it, has been found ; also three hatches, ten small boxes, one much broken : a sailor's ditty box, and a great number of spars and deals, all belonging to the ill-fated *Cambria*. A piece of a chest came ashore, at Portstewart, on Sunday, with the name "William M'Rae, Oban," and "*Cambria*, Glasgow," upon it. M'Rae acted as first cook in the *Cambria*. One of the steamer's lifebuoys has also been cast ashore. On Saturday one of the boats of the *Cambria* drifted ashore at Bush Foot. There were four holes in her bottom.

Of course this is only a partial and trifling account of what came ashore along the whole coast. As I walked about the wreck-strewn beach the condition of the relics drifted in was full of mournful interest. Scarcely anything was in a sound state, except a few barrels of apples, which had been saved during the night. Everything seemed to be more or

less shivered ; and the quantity of splinters told a fearful tale. Splintered timbers, of one kind and another,—spars, deals, chests, furniture, and nameless fragments,—lined the beach ; and amongst the melancholy *débris* there was, here and there, some ragged bit that attracted special attention. Part of the bottom of a boat, all shattered and jagged ; a seaman's crushed chest ; a broken panel, from the door of one of the berths, with "94" painted upon it ; cabin cushions, all colourless now, and sodden with sand and wet ; the lid of a handsome leather-covered trunk, ribbed with brass, and studded with brass nails, torn off at the hinges ; a life-buoy ; bits of wood moulding and fragments of painted wood belonging to the broken cabin furniture ; bits of hand-railing ; a rugged piece of board, upon which was painted "Captain Carnaghan, S.S. Cambria," in black letters ; and upon the bank at Bush Foot, at the south end of the strand, I saw the very boat mentioned in the *Belfast Morning News* as having drifted up here with four holes in her. Among the wreck there was a great number of apples,—more or less broken. I met one man who, having picked up a small parcel, carefully wrapped and tied in a piece of cloth, thought he had met with a prize, till he found that it contained four rudely-shaped bodkins, used by sailors ; and a lad who was leading one of the carts pulled up, and, unfolding a wet fifty-cent "greenback," he asked me what I thought that was worth.

Almost the last sight I saw in connection with this wreck was the saddest of all. On the night of the 20th, after I returned from the shore, news came to the hotel that the body of a woman had washed up on the strand, and that

she was lying in the house of Charlie Weir, a well-known fisherman, who dwells in a little white cottage about a quarter of a mile from the hotel, and in full view from its front windows. I saw the body there, next day. From all that I heard and saw, the following, from the *Belfast Morning News*, is an accurate description of her appearance when found :—

About twenty-five years of age, a little over five feet in height, and remarkably well formed. Her hair is of a light-brown colour ; she is long-visaged, full in the cheeks, and has a small mouth. On the fourth finger of the left hand there was a plain gold ring, and an enamelled ring, set with rubies and pearls. She had on a jacket of dark-green colour, two dark cloth petticoats, heavy corded dress, and black kid boots, of the finest description, with brass heels. Her under-clothing was of a very superior kind, indicating that she must have been a first-class passenger. There was no money in her pockets, nor anything found on the lady which could lead to identification.

About noon on the 21st, as I walked in the direction of the cottage, I saw that there was an unusual bustle about the place. A car was standing at the gate, and a little crowd of neighbours was gathered about the door. I found that the inquest was just over ; and there, in the middle of the enclosure, in front of the cottage, lay the clothing of the drowned woman, all sandy and damp, as they were found upon her. When I entered the house, it was full of people ; and there, under the one little window, lay the body, clothed in snow-white shroud and cap, ready for burial. The eyes were very nearly closed, but the lips were slightly parted, and the countenance was beautifully calm, as if she had fallen asleep. “ Decay’s effacing fingers ” had not yet “ swept

the lines where beauty lingers." Poor girl! It made me feel sad to see her lying there; nameless; and far from her home and friends; and laid out by the hands of strangers, to be buried in a strange grave.

It must have been a fearful scene on board the *Cambria*, when she struck upon Inistrahull in that dark and stormy night; with passengers and crew all elate, after a prosperous voyage, within sight of shore, and eager to meet their waiting friends. In the words of the *Belfast Express*:—

Even a battle field, with all its horrors, is not quite so appalling as the picture which the imagination raises of that midnight tempest,—the horrible crashing of the steamer, the wild cries, the despairing rush to the boats, and the hopeless engulfment in the raging waters. A glance at the Wreck Chart for 1869 shows that Inistrahull has cost ships and lives before. Two or three "black dots" about the island prove that it is a dangerous place; as, indeed, it must be, lying in the track of vessels taking the northern course. It is a dreary chart, this map of wrecks, and thicker for the year just ended than any before with those dark spots which betoken where a ship found her grave, and those red ones which indicate that mariners have perished.

The night after my visit to the strand, I saw from the headlands the revolving light upon Inistrahull, gleaming bright as ever across the waters; and the sea was rolling calmly into the little bay, over the uncrowded graves of the drowned.





Ulster Notes.

CHAPTER I.

"YE PHILOSOPHERS AT PLAYE."

Dulce et decorum est—desipere in loco.

THE Middle Ages had their pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, and holy places; of which Old Ireland, "The Isle of Saints," had a considerable share. But "Lough Derg," or "The Purgatory of Saint Patrick," whose splintery rocks have been worn smooth by the shuffling knees of centuries of wailing devotees, is now decidedly on the wane; and "the emerald gem of the western sea" has never seen a more remarkable gathering than that of the pilgrims of science which met in Belfast during the sunny month of August. This forty-fourth meeting of the British Association has made "a shaking amongst the dry bones," which is likely to last for some time to come. Immediately after Professor Tyndall had dropped his scientific bomb-shell amongst the fierce religious dogmatists of Ulster, there came a dead calm of speechless astonishment, during which "the boldest held his breath

for a while," and then an underground rumble of dissent was heard, growing louder and stronger, till it suddenly burst into a wild hurricane of theological defiance. On all sides, "the pulpit drum ecclesiastic" rattled forth the point of war; and the slogans of religious clans gradually filled all the air of Belfast. Two nights after Professor Tyndall's daring and dignified assertion of the claims of independent investigation, Professor Huxley planted another great shot in the same direction; and now the campaign has fairly opened between science and the theological dogmas of the day; and the battle rages near and far upon the field of thought. The fiery cross has darted through the land. There is hardly a pulpit in Ulster which has not already ministered to the fray; and every arm of the service has been brought into action, from the light musketry of irregular lay skirmishers to the heavy artillery of authorised clerical invective; and, amongst the uproar of pulpit denunciation, I have heard of one sermon preached against the libertinism of the press, the text of which was,—“and they could not get nigh unto Him, on account of the *press*.” What is to be the upshot of the fray, or how long it will last, we cannot tell. What it will clear away from the free current of thought, and what it will leave behind to satisfy the emotional cravings of man's nature, we cannot yet see. The contest may last a long time; but the great points of conflict have been long smouldering in the minds of men; and, come what may, whatever is really true has nothing to fear from free discussion amongst the foremost minds of the time on both sides. But you will hear more than enough on these subjects, in other directions; and my province, just now, as

an outsider, is to present to you a less serious phase of the great gathering which is now dissolved, namely,—“Ye Philosophers at playe,” when the severe duties of the meeting were drawing to a close.

Those who imagine that ardent pursuit of science is necessarily associated with stern asceticism are a little mistaken. Philosophy, like many other things in this world, has its Bohemian side; and even wisdom airs its folly, now and then. When the great speeches had been made, and the great papers had been read; and the small fry were struggling to crowd their contributions into the different sections before the close of the meeting, the breezy spirits of the Association began to unbend a little. Great numbers took flight to places of interest at a distance, many of them returning the same day to bask in the general glow of hospitality which lighted up the whole town of Belfast during the meeting of the Association. But perhaps the most remarkable phase of relaxation was the meeting of the “Red Lion Club,” an institution which had its rise in the Association itself, and is limited to its members. The following brief history of this singular club, by Professor Taylor, of Ipswich, who is himself an old “Red Lion,” may not be uninteresting:—

Its originator was Professor Edward Forbes, a man who took such a hold on the affection of his scientific *confrères* that, though he has been dead eighteen years, his memory is yet fresh in the minds of those who were personally acquainted with him. About thirty years ago he was a rising young man, and, like many others about him who attended the meetings, not overburdened with cash. The dignitaries of the Association were just beginning to be recognised by municipal authorities, and invited to big dinners, the younger scientific men being left out in the cold. Thereupon Forbes

and a few kindred spirits determined to start a club of their own, at which beef-steaks and stout or ale should form the *pièce de résistance*, with whisky toddy to follow, accompanied by songs and ballads, mostly *impromptu*, with witty parodies of scientific papers and lectures. The following year the club was duly and regularly founded, and some of the *Maga* club, which had been instituted at Edinburgh by Forbes and others when he was a student at the University, were dovetailed into that of the "Red Lions." The name was derived from the sign of the tavern where the first beef-steak supper was held. The members of the new club were all rising men, and their company as well as their club began to be sought for. The doings of this gathering of scientific good-fellows presently became somewhat famous, for in the exuberance of his imaginative fun Forbes had introduced a system of ludicrous mock-masonic mysteries and practices. Some of these still cling to the "Red Lion" Club, although some young naturalists are prevented from joining by the guinea annual dinner, for the club has unwisely forsaken its primitive diet of beef and ale, and taken to courses. It has, also, lost one of its most cheerful members in the person of Professor Rankine, whose Jove-like head never looked so grand as when he was singing one of his own songs among the "Red Lions." For several years Rankine was "Lion-King," the equivalent of "chairman" in the language of men.

The young provincial naturalist, who has looked up to the leaders in science with reverential awe, is a little taken aback when he is first introduced to the "Red Lion" Club. Whilst dinner is being served or waited for, leonine, ursine, and hippopotamus grunts and roars are heard, and the affrighted, perspiring waiters start as they are serving the soup to some rampant "Red Lion," and get a sharp snarl and snap instead of the ordinary "thanks!" Grace before meat is spoken by the "Lion Chaplain" thus:—"Brother lions, let us *prey*!" The chair and vice-chairs are filled by men distinguished in the scientific world, who seem to enter into the rollicking fun of the thing with all the zest of minds that have not been unbent for twelve months. The speeches overflow with wit and broad humour, and are responded to by the leonine roars of the audience, who growl and wag the tails of their dress-coats in approval."

Two nights before the close of the Association's proceed-

ings in Belfast, "the Red Lions" met at the Linen Hall Hotel, and certainly enjoyed "most exquisite fooling." The following was the *ménu* of their supper :—

Tête de cheval au naturel ; jambe de bœuf au sang ; entrailles diverses ; moutons enlevés ; tête de veau envahie ; chien écorché ; tête de bœuf à l'abbatoir. Beverages—Vin du pays Irlandais ; vin du pays Ecossais ; grogs à l'eau ; idem au syphon ; ponch chaud.

The Lion-King occupied the chair. After devotional exercises, and the usual leonine toasts, the following speeches were made :—

Professor Tyndall : On the fortuitous concourse of atoms, with special reference to the first chapter of Genesis.

Professor Huxley : On the functions of Marionettes, and the origin of nothing.

Dr. Carpenter : On Huxleyism, and the abnormal exercise of the critical function.

Sir George Campbell : On the wrongs of property, and the ryotous classes of India.

Sir John Lubbock : On the little busy bee, with quotations from Dr. Watts-his-name, and some remarks on the liberties taken by the Press.

Mr. Frys (of Bradford) : On Sir John Lubbock, at large.

Lord O'Hagan : On *Christian* charity, and the wrong of public judgment.

Sir George Campbell (again) : On Khassia, and Circassia, and Mrs. Khassia, and women's rights, and men's lefts.

Sir William Wilde : On Ireland's Eye.

A young man of the name of Guppy : On spirits, and the supernatural.

The Chief Magistrate of Belfast : On gas, and its effect on modern gold ornaments.

Professor Clerk Maxwell : On comic sections and comic songs.

Dr. Hooker : On Shelley's "Ode to the sensitive plant," considered in relation to the present price of butcher's meat.

The forty-fourth meeting of the Association is now over ; and Belfast is gradually cooling down, with the exception of

the religious element, which is likely to continue at fever-heat for a long time. The "Red Lions" are sundered for another year, and have trickled off, homeward, to ponder seriously upon the work that lies before them in the coming time.

CHAPTER II.

Let us wander about the streets and note the qualities
of people.

SHAKESPEARE.

HEN the great scientific tide had retired from the shore of Belfast Lough, and the astonished town was beginning to recover its breath, I lingered there and thereabouts a day or two, "to see what I could see," as the old ballad says. Amongst the first things that caught my attention were certain indications of the end of the great strike. Standing upon high ground, near "Queen's College," in its pleasant western suburb, which overlooks the whole of the old swamp-recovered town of Belfast, or "*Beal ma farsad*," "The mouth of the ford," I saw, on all sides, the tall chimneys, which had been smokeless for eight weeks, belching forth their dusky clouds into the air again. Down in the town there were fewer scowling loungers at the street corners; there were fewer mendicant women and children wandering about the footpaths; and there was a cheerful bustle upon the flags of the Exchange. As I sauntered along I met company after company of the extra police, who had been quartered here, for two months

previous, now on their way to the station for Dublin, all in marching order, with knapsacks, rifles, and side arms. There is a remarkable difference in the physical appearance of the police here and that of the round-faced, taciturn, large-bodied Saxon "peeler" on our side of the water. The men, here, are taller, and have more elegant figures ; and they are longer in the leg ; but they don't seem to cover as much ground as the solid, surly, substantial darling who paces the streets of our city as if he was measuring off the land for building purposes, with his thick-set compasses ; whilst in the features of the police, here, there is a general prevalence of the Celtic and Ulster-Scotch character, which is very striking to Sassenach eyes. There is something in the faces of these tall, dark-clad, Celtic-looking men, with their jaunty-set caps, and an occasional love-lock, dangling sprucely from the brow, that sets me dreaming of the wild kerne and gallowglass of the ancient chieftains of Ulster,—the O'Neils, O'Donnells, and Tyrconnells,—who ruled these northern parts of Ireland until the time of English Elizabeth.

• • • During my stay, every paper I took up contained challenges to discussion "upon an open platform, before an Ulster audience," and fierce letters, and announcements of sermons to be preached in opposition to the views of Professors Tyndall and Huxley. The same theme was the subject of conversation wherever I went in this feverish land of conflicting faiths ; indeed, the British Association has left the whole province in a state of red-hot theological eruption. The walls of the town, too, bore fresh evidence every morning of the same belligerent tone ; but amongst these fiery polemical placards, there were some announcing

articles of a humorous character, one of which, "Barney Maglone's Lecture to the British Association on the Natural History of the Banshee," seems to have been an especial favourite. This was published in one of the Belfast papers, and the run for it was so great, that up to this time I have not been able to get a copy. "Barney Maglone" is the name assumed by a clever writer in the local dialect here, and his discourses upon passing incidents of the day are sometimes characterised by great humour. This week "Barney Maglone" is said to be comparatively tame. The following quotations can hardly be said to be favourable samples of his best manner, but as they relate to the prevailing topics of the time, they may serve to show what is going on. Barney is supposed to be in conversation with an Earl:—

Earl : Tell me now, Barney, what you believe about the British Association and the Infidels.

Barney : I believe the laste said is soonest mended :

For that Assosheation
'S a mighty botheration ;
An', och, the agitation
 It stharterd near an' far !
They say Professor Tyndall
Is nothing but a swindle ;
But, dad, it's him can kindle
 A dacent bit of war !
They say he's a deceiver ;
A mighty misbeliever ;
An' nothin' but a reiver,
 Our thrue belief to stale.
They say he'd make us donkeys ;
An' prove that grinnin' flunkeys
Are nothin' but big monkeys
 That only want the tail.

He'd prove the sun a griddle
 Three feet across the middle;
 An' that it's but a fiddle
 We see up in the moon.
 An' if he could get at her,
 The soundin' boord he'd batther,
 An' raise so sweet a clatther,
 We'd have a darlin' tune.

But, man dear, my lord an' so forth, the visitation of the Assosheation was nothin' to the one we're goin' to have now.

Earl: What's that?

Barney: One from Dizzy, no less! Oh, it's thruth I'm tellin' you,—or somebody else is a sore liar. There's a dhreadful note of preparation for the condyne appearans of that thranslucent man. Them that wouldn't give the dim ghost of a brass fardin to save all the millworkers from stharvation are ready to give out their goold like slate stones for the glory of the Tory that's a Radical at heart, an' that looks on them with the shublyme reverence due to a litther of blind pups.

Earl: But what are they goin' to do with him when he comes here?

Barney: First an' foremost, he's to be made a 'onory member of the Town Council, bein' presented with the freedom of the city in a kick from the Mare undher the left lug. Then Brother Ward, D.P.V.C.LL.D.D.W.T.R.C.H.L., is to take him away, give him a ride on the goat, an' make him a full member of the Black Purple Ordher. Then Brother Pyper, G.W.C.T.I.O.G.T., is to give him another goin' over an' make him a Good Templar. Then he's to be taken to Fountain Sthreet an' made one of the Brethren. Afther that he's to be baptyzed in the Blackstaff, havin' been only paedorhantyzed in his young days. Then Mr. Corry is to lade him thro' the mills, an' show him all their butys, an' speshally intherduce him to the girls, an' let him see how well they look, afther the lovin' way he took care of them durin' the sthrike. Then, in the evenin', there's to be a ball an' supper in the Ulsther Hall,—speshally the supper. Afther the supper, Professor Dizzy is to disprove all that Professor Tyndall proved, an' throw considherable doubt on ev'rything else. When that's comfortably done, Mr. Noah Davis is to

sing "The Maid of Judah," accompany'd by the Town Clark on the thrambone. The entertainment of that evenin' is to wind up with a cunthry dance to the tune of "Shawn Buidh," yourself an' Mr, Dizzy ladin' off.

Earl : Is it me !

Barney : Jist your own four bones."

The other day, whilst waiting at the corner of Donegal Place, coming from the tramway omnibus, I lingered longer than was necessary, listening to the banter going on amongst the car-drivers, hard by. "Holy Nelly !" cried one of them, pointing to a man of enormous bulk, who was waddling along the opposite side of the street, "Holy Nelly, Mick, d'ye see the dimensions o' that fellow ! Begorra, ye might make a small family out o' the calf of his leg !" "Oh, murder," replied the other, "wouldn't he make a fine corpse !" "Hollo, Dan," cried another, to a poor fellow who was hurrying by with a great basketful of butcher's meat, "It'll be a big day with ye the day, about twelve, my buck ! Come here, till I spake to ye !" "Och, quit that, ye blackguard," replied the poor fellow, "would ye be after puttin' me astray, an' I breakin' my heart to remimber the master's orders." "More power t'ye, Dan," said the car-man ; "an' the man that burns ye for a fool will lose his coals !" During the Association Meeting, an Irish gentleman here invited a large party of friends and strangers to dinner, and, whilst they were seated at meat, finding the attendance very slack and disorderly, he said to his servant man, "Barney ; how is it that the waiting's so bad ?" "Bedad, sir," replied the man, before the whole company, "the waiting's aigual to the wages !" An eminent Irish member of the Association was walking along High Street,

the other day, with his daughter on his arm, when a poor beggar asked alms of him, with the usual mendicant eloquence of his race. The learned doctor turned a deaf ear to his appeal, whereupon Paddy began to try the lady. "Och, sure," said he, "your honour's kind-hearted good lady wouldn't refuse me a copper, an' me stharvin' on the street!" "Get out o' that," said the doctor, "the lady's not married at all." "Arrah, then," replied Paddy, "it's the fault o' the men she's not married,—with such beautiful eyes!" Of course, this was too much for the warm Celtic heart of the learned doctor; who told the tale afterwards, with great glee. The air of this land is full of such sayings as these; and they fall upon the ear of a stranger with all the force of novelty. But, whatever else I met with in the genial and thriving city of Belfast, I learnt, decidedly, that in this part of the island, at least, Irishmen do not all wear clothing made of "holes sowed together;" nor do they all carry shelalehs; neither do they all "drink raw whisky out of the heels of their shoes."



CHAPTER III.

LOUGH NEAGH.

On Lough Neagh's bank, as the fisherman strays,
When the clear, cold eve's declining,
He sees the round towers of other days,
In the waves beneath him shining. MOORE.

IT rained hard all the twenty-four miles from Belfast to Randalstown, which is the nearest point on the line to Lough Neagh, — the largest lake in the British Islands. We found a string of jaunting-cars standing by the station. Cars, drivers, horses, and cushions were all steeping in the still descending shower. Those blithe charioteers, however, seemed quite at home in the heavy wet ; indeed our own driver assured me, as he switched the water from his hat, that he was “as merry as a lamb wi’ two mothers ;” nor did the weeping skies appear to damp the spirits of the rest of our company ; for the glorious woods of “Shane’s Castle,” all glittering glad in cool, fresh moisture, were rustling before us ; through which these “happy-go-lucky” conveyances were waiting to take us forward to the ivy-clad ruin at the head of the lake. “Shane’s Castle,” and the woods thereto belonging,—which stretch away for miles along the northern shore of the lake,—are part of the vast ancient possessions of the O’Neils, once kings of Ulster. The modern mansion of the present Lord O’Neil is finely situated, in the midst of the woods, about half a mile from the ruined fortress of those proud and turbulent lords, who ruled this province of Ireland until the great rebellion of the northern chieftains,—the O’Neils

the O'Donnells, and Tyrconnells, with all their wild feudatories,—in the reign of Elizabeth, when they were utterly defeated, and driven into exile ; and when the greatest part of the province was reduced to a blood-stained waste. This led to “The Plantation of Ulster,” or the colonisation of the depopulated country by English and Scottish settlers, to whom large grants of land were made in the reign of James the First ; and hence arose the strong disparity, in race and religion, between the north and the south of the island,—standing face to face, like hostile camps in the same land. The southern Irishman still speaks of Ulster as “The Black North ;” and as one wanders about the towns and villages of this now fiercely-protestant region, it is curious to mark how thinly the names of the old Celtic population are scattered amongst those of English and Scottish origin. But I will return to the record of our trip to Lough Neagh.

About a quarter of a mile beyond the station we came to the park gates. Slowly defiling past the porter's lodge, we found ourselves at once under the shade of lofty, over arching trees,

That faire did spread
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse overcaste ;

and from whose rain-laden leaves a gust of wind, now and then, shook down a splashy shower upon our heads. The solemn old woods, clad in summer greenery, seemed as if they were waiting to let the wanderers go by :

And all within were paths and alleies wide,
With footing worne and leading inward farre ;
Faire harbour that them seems : so in they entred ar.

For the next hour or so we wound slowly, in and out, among the woods, where the leafy screen over-head was sometimes so thick that the subdued light below seemed tinged with the hue of surrounding verdure. Our way was lined with forest trees of great size and beauty ; and many a monarch of the woods, whose " antique root "—all gnarls, and knots, and wandering twists, o'ergrown with moss,—spread out its mighty grasp upon the green earth, awoke our admiration as we went by. And, now and then, through openings in the trees, we caught glimpses of cool, still glades, so thickly hemmed in by the ancient woods that it seemed as if no life had ever wandered there but the " poor dappled fools " of the forest, their sole inhabitants from age to age. Twice in the course of that pleasant meander we crossed the beautiful river Mayne, which empties itself into Lough Neagh near " Shane's Castle ; " and a fine yacht lay at anchor in the stream, about half a mile from its mouth. At a convenient place on our way the cars halted under the trees, and we walked down to a point on the shore which commands the longest stretch of Lough Neagh ; and, though an inland lake, it looks from this spot like a great arm of the sea, leading out westward into the open Atlantic. As far as the eye could see, the waters and the sky bounded the view. The lake is about twenty miles long, by an average of fifteen miles broad. We were accompanied by certain learned men, well acquainted with the geology, botany, and archæology of the country ; and, whilst lingering upon this upper shore, a map of the lake was spread out before us, upon which the soundings were given, showing that, though in some

places it is more than a hundred feet deep, its average depth is about forty-five feet ; and that there is one curious shoal spot about the centre, which is only sixteen feet deep. That the water of Lough Neagh has the power of petrification is undoubtedly true. Several fine specimens of wood petrified by the waters of the lake were laid before us. They were very beautiful, being real petrifications, and not merely incrustations, and specimens of fossil trees are frequently to be met with among the peasantry and fishermen upon the banks of the lake. It was for a long time a cherished notion that it only took three years' immersion in the waters of Lough Neagh to turn wood into stone. This, however, is very far from the fact, although, even now,

Lough Neagh hones !

They're put in sticks, and they come out stones,

is a familiar cry upon the streets of Dublin. We found several fishermen straying on the bank of the Lough, who showed us a few fine pollan, the fish which is common in its waters. This fish abounds here ; it is of a bright silvery hue, and about the size of a small herring, but comparatively tasteless. There are several legends respecting the origin of Lough Neagh. One of these is, of course, associated with the all-pervading Fin McCoul, to whom everything extraordinary in nature is attributed in this land. It is said that Fin, who had been challenged to fight by an English giant, took up an immense stone from its bed, leaving the hole which is now filled by Lough Neagh ; and as he was stepping across from Ireland to England, with the stone in his apron, the strings of his

apron broke, and down went the stone plump into the sea, forming the present Isle of Man. Another legend still cherished is given by William Caxton, our first English printer, in his "History of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland," published in 1497. He says,—

There is a Lake in Ulster and moche fysshe therein, whiche is xxx. myles in lengthe and xv. in brede. The Riuer Ban runneth out of the Lake into the north ocean, and men say that this Lake began in this manner: there were men in this contre that were of evyle lyvinge,—and there was a wele in ye lande in grete reuerence of olde tyme and always couered, and yf it were left uncouered, ye wele wolde rise and drowne all the lande, and so id hoped yd a woman wente to ye wele for to fetch water, and hyed her fasd to her child yd wepd in ye cradele, and left ye wele uncouered,—then ye wele sprynged so fastly yd drowned ye woman and her childe, and made all ye contre a lake and fysshe ponde. For to prove this, it is a grete argument that when the weder is clear fysshers of yd water see in ye grounde under ye water rounde towers, and hyghe shapen steeples and churches of yd land.

Moore's beautiful song, "On Lough Neagh's bank, as the fisherman strays," alludes to the same legend. Whilst talking together on these things, as we wandered about the shore of the lake, one of our company, who was a native of the neighbourhood, told of a fisherman who, having accidentally lost his anchor in the lake, cried out, as he gazed down into the water, "Bi mi soul, boys, it's gone down a chimney!"

Returning from the water side, we were shown a fine specimen of an ancient Irish canoe, or "single-stick boat," as they are sometimes called by the antiquary. This rude ship of the aboriginal mariner was found deep-bedded in a neighbouring peat-bog. It had been roughly scooped

and burned out of the bole of a great oak-tree ; and is now quite black. From this we went on to the ruins of "Shane's Castle," which stand close by the waterside, at the head of the lake. This old castle of the O'Neils was destroyed by fire in 1816 ; but the ruined walls, with their towers and turrets, are now thickly-clad with ivy, and look very picturesque. High up in the castle wall there is a rude effigy of a coronetted lady's head, built up in the masonry. It is called, "The Black Stone of the O'Neils ;" and its preservation is traditionally associated with the fate of the family. The vaults beneath the castle are of great extent, and the masonry is quite fresh. About five hundred yards in the rearward of the castle there is an ancient graveyard of the O'Neils, half-buried in the dense greenery of the woods. The headstones, leaning hither and thither, amidst the rank verdure, are so thickly bemossed, that the inscriptions and rude sculptures are hidden. Great cobwebs hang from tree to tree ; and the whole place seems as if it was utterly forgotten by mankind. In this old grave-yard there is a little mortuary chapel, or burial-vault, half-sunken in the ground ; or rather, the thick, over-hanging verdure, falling year after year, has raised the ground so much, that now the doorway of the vault is half choked up. Over the entrance to the vault there is a rude stone slab, bearing the following inscription :—
"This vault was erected in the year 1660, by Shean Mac Phelim Mac Bryan Mac Shean O'Neil, Esq., as a burying-place for himself and the family of Clandeboy." . . .
Leaving "Shane's Castle," and the wild manories of the Red Hand of Ulster, we rode away through the park, and

by the northern skirt of Antrim town, to visit the famous Round Tower of Antrim,—one of the most perfect in all Ireland. The tower is thirty-one yards high, and eighteen yards in circumference at the base. We were admitted to the private grounds, in which the tower is now such a striking and interesting feature. It stands upon an artificial mound, about five feet above the surrounding level. The lowmost doorway is about twelve feet above the base of the tower. I climbed the ladder which led into this doorway. The floor was thickly covered with sticks and other rubbish. The tower has had four floors ; and rude corbels were visible above our heads, upon which the successive floors have rested. The communication from floor to floor seems to have been by ladders, which could be drawn up, if necessary. The lower part of the tower was overgrown with ivy ; and above the lowmost doorway may be traced the rude sculpture of a cross within a circle. This tower was, perhaps, the most singularly interesting object we had seen during the day. From this place we rode onward, through the main street of Antrim town. It was market-day, and the old town was quaintly busy with cattle and country folk. At the head of the market-place we entered the gateway of Massarene Castle. The castle is an old embattled building, with towers and turrets ; and close by the east end of the castle is an ancient Danish “ rath ” or fortified mound, now carefully preserved. At the castle, by the kindness of Sir Richard Wallace, an excellent collation was served to the guests ; after which they returned to Belfast, in “ the clear, cold eve’s declining,” delighted with their trip to Lough Neagh.

CHAPTER IV.

Erin ! the tear and the smile in thine eyes
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in thy skies.

MOORE.



THE tide of Irish emigration is by no means confined to the south and west of the island. Great numbers of the hardy peasantry of Ulster,—chiefly of English and Scottish descent,—leave that land every year, to try their fortunes beyond the sea. With them, however, it is not so much dire necessity that drives, as an ambitious and adventurous spirit, impelling them to better their condition, in any part of the world which offers the greatest advantages ; and, as a rule, they are not restrained by that intense hereditary love of the soil which characterises the descendants of the old Celtic inhabitants of the island, who rarely leave Ireland until driven from it by distress ; and who never leave it but with the cherished intent of returning again to the land of their fathers,—to them,

More dear in its sorrow, its gloom, and its showers,
Than the rest of the world in its sunniest hours.

But it seems, indeed, as if there was something in the very air of Ireland that nurtures the emotional nature in man ; and the Ulster peasant betrays no lack of natural affection when he takes leave of the country where his forefathers settled some two or three centuries ago. In this respect, he is far more demonstrative than our phlegmatic race, on

this side of the channel. I was at Ballymena station the other day, when I saw a distressing scene. A company of stout young peasants were leaving by the train, for Londonderry, from whence they were to take shipping for Canada. The whole platform was crowded with their friends and relatives,—all simple, rustic folk,—from hoary-headed age, leaning upon its staff, to the unconscious infant, crowing in its mother's arms. That parting scene was painfully touching. Every eye was drowned in tears ; and the wild, unrestrained cries of affection, as they embraced each other, again and again, moved even the porters, to whom such scenes were familiar. As the train began to move slowly away, two or three of those upon the platform clung, screaming, to the carriage doors, until dragged away ; and, amongst the wild outcry that arose from those left behind, one poor woman fell back upon a seat against the wall, wailing, " Oh, my darlin' ! my darlin' ! "—whilst an old, white-haired man, hard by, dropped down upon his knees, and, with uplifted arms, cried, " Oh, may the hand of the blessed God be about thee, my own son ! "

About three miles south of the little town of Portrush, the farm of " Roselick " lies upon the summit of a pleasant upland, commanding a fine view of the sea, and of the wild mountains of Donegal. In former years I often went out to Roselick, to wander about the farm, and to chat with the old farmer and his wife. About twenty years ago, one of their sons, and two daughters, left Ireland for the United States, where they got on well, and settled down. The son was about nineteen years old when he left home, and though he wrote regularly to his parents, they had almost

given up all hope of ever seeing him again in the old land. One rainy day, however, about two months ago, when the farmer's wife was busy in the kitchen, a sun-browned, middle-aged man, walked in at the open doorway, as if for shelter. With the usual hospitality of the race, she set a seat by the fire for the stranger, and said, "Did ye travel far the day, good man?" "Yes," replied he, "I'm from America." "America," said she, "an' what part o' America may ye come fra?" "I'm from Baltimore," replied he. "Baltimore," cried she, "why then ye'll ken some o' my weans, I'll awarnd ye!" "What name?" said he. "My son's name is Daniel ——," replied she. "Well, now," said the stranger, rising from his seat, "would ye take me for him?" "Oh, Dan, dear," cried the old woman, dropping the pan from her hands, "is it you?" . . . Dan and I had many a chat together about a fortnight ago; but he showed no disposition to remain in the land of his birth, where, he said, everything had "a wee look" after his long residence in America.

During my recent visit to Ireland, I went, with a party of scientific gentlemen, on a trip to the "Giant's Causeway." When we reached that famous scene, our company was, as usual, besieged with guides, boatmen, and sellers of specimens and photographs. Most of these were personally known to me. Old Alick Laverty was there,—“The King o' the Guides.” “Old John” was at “The Giant's Well,” as usual, selling the water, and giving the whisky. “Con-naught Mary” was there, with her little tin snuff-box, and her ruddy, old, wrinkled face, and her little basket of specimens. “Jemmy McAlister” was there, better known as

“Jemmy Morning ;” and it was an amusing thing to hear Jemmy carefully explaining the Causeway formation, and the stratification of the cliffs, to the eminent geologists who were in our party. And there, too, we found, “Old Nancy Graham,” presiding in the famous “wishing chair.” Poor old Nancy’s story is a sad one. Her husband was a fisherman ; and, for many years, they dwelt, with their four stalwart sons, in a little cottage, down at Black Rock, close by the sea. Their four sons were reckoned among the boldest fishermen upon the coast. One wild day, when the four sons were out fishing, they put into Portrush, about five miles down the coast, and there they lingered till after night-fall. In the meantime, a great storm had arisen, and the friends of the young fishermen tried to persuade them not to tempt the sea that night ; but, proud of their strength, and inflamed with drink, they recklessly rowed away into the black storm. They succeeded in reaching the little bay, where their father’s firelight shone down upon the raging waters ; and there, within cry of their own home, the boat was upset, and they were all drowned ; and the old man and his wife, screaming upon the bank, heard their drowning cries. The old man lived two or three years after ; but, day by day, he used to sit upon the bank, gazing silently upon the spot where his sons went down.





The Irish Fishwife.

(A quiet street in the city. MRS. SULLIVAN, looking out of her doorway at the rain.—BIDDY MACGUIRE coming down the street, crying fish.)

“**H**ERRIN’; fresh herrin’; herrin’ alive! Fine mackerel! Any mackerel to-day, ma’am? Buy a few herrin’, ma’am,—seven for sixpence. They’re fresh in this mornin’. Look at them. Sure, they’re beautiful.”

“Not to-day.”

“Look at thim mackerel, ma’am. Sure it’s not six hours since they were spoortin’ in the say. See the salt water drippin’ from their jaws. Oh, ma’am, take six-pen’oth of herrin’ from me this mornin’! I’ll let you have aight for sixpence. Arrah, they cost me well-nigh that in the market,—an’ I bringin’ ’em down to your own door. Och, take six-pen’oth from me, ma’am! Sure, they’re chaiper than butcher’s mait, anyhow. Buy a few for picklin’, ma’am! They’re just in saison, now.”

“I’ll give ye sixpence for ten.”

“Ah, don’t be too hard on me, ma’am, an’ I tryin’ to scrape a thin livin’ for the childer!”

"I'll give no more."

"Ah, well then, indeed, indeed, it's no use. (*Takes up her basket.*) Oh, musha, musha, but the women is far harder than the min! . . . Herrin'; fresh herrin'; herrin' alive!"

(MRS. SULLIVAN *at her door.*)

"Well, Biddy, woman; sure this is the quare day for ye. An' what have ye got for us at all at all, this murtherin' wet mornin'? Take down the basket, till I see it! Arrah, what ails the craiter? Is it a cowl'd ye've got, Biddy?"

"Oh, Mistress Sullivan, darlin',—for the love o' God,—av ye never buy another fish from me as long as ye live, buy somethin' from me this mornin', that I may go home to the childer! Oh, ma'am, dear, the heart's brakin' in me as I go about the town this day! Oh, *weirasthrue, weirasthrue*, why am I stricken down like this?—Glory be to God! Ah, ma'am, dear, all the while I'm trailin' about the streets, cryin', 'Fresh herrin'!' an' collougin' wi' the customers, my poor heart's bleedin', for I'm thinkin', 'Jemmy, Jemmy, my darlin', are ye livin' yet, or are ye dead an' gone from me for evermore?' Oh, maybe some cold hand is closing the eyes of my child this blessed minute, an' I away from his bed! Oh, Mistress Sullivan, my poor boy is destroyed!"

"Holy Vargin; what's this ye're sayin', Biddy? Gi' me the basket, woman, an' come in out o' the rain! In the name o' the Lord, Biddy, dear, what's the matter?"

"Oh, wirra, wirra, God help me, what'll I do this blessed day that's in it? An' him the oldest of six, an' the flower o' the flock! Oh, Jemmy, Jemmy, darlin', what'll I do, what'll I do?"

"Oh, Biddy, dear; is it the little curly-headed gorsoon that used to help ye to carry the fish?"

"Indeed, indeed, it is just the same. . . . Oh, my own brave an' beautiful boy! Oh, the light of heaven's own loveliness was about my little sootherin' darlin'! He was just turned eleven years old, ma'am. . . . Oh, the hand of the Lord is heavy upon me this sorrowful hour! What'll I do, what'll I do?"

"Arrah, Biddy, dear, don't take on so! Sure ye're not quite alone in the world; an' the great God is in the heavens above us all, yet! An' what is it has happened, Biddy, dear?"

"Ah, well; it's many's the time ye've seen him trottin', barefoot, through the streets by my side, smilin' and prattlin' all the way, as we wandered through the heavy rain. Oh, may the sweet heavens be your bed, my own beautiful darlin'! . . . An', indeed, ma'am, it's yerself knows the sore trouble I had when poor Barney died, and left me my lone, wi' the six o' them,—the craitors. An' I had no one in the world, barrin' my own little Jemmy,—the bright-eyed darlin' that was no more nor a child himself,—I had no one in the world but him to look after the childer for me whilst I was away on the streets sellin' my fish. An', indeed, indeed, it's well he did it, too, an' willin' he was to lessen the burden for me,—my own kind-hearted little gorsoon, that was the dear light o' my eyes! Sure he always met me in the doorway with a smile. Ah, many's the time he wiped the tears away, when I sat down, lonesome an' heart-sore, an' wet to the skin, after wandering about in the rain for hours together! . . . Well, it was yesterday mornin', I

wint out at five o'clock, lavin' the childer in bed, in the care o' Jemmy,—for if ye don't go airly to the market for your fish it's no use going out at all. An' sure it's myself that can't afford to lose a day's sale, for it's all I have to depend on in the wide world. Well, d'ye see, ma'am, about aight o'clock in the mornin', Jemmy got up in his shirt, an' made the fire, an' began to get the breakfast ready for the childer; an', oh, ma'am, my poor boy's clothes tuk fire, an' he ran scramin' out o' the door, an' into a neighbour woman's house, cryin' for help."

"Oh, *Veeha Vaugha* (Virgin Mother), the poor child!"

"An', oh, ma'am, dear,—the woman ran my poor boy back into the street, an' closed the door behind him,—an' he all in flames."

"Oh, the hard-hearted blackguard! May the ——"

"Arrah, ye may well say that, Mistress Sullivan! But, see this, now! Bi the mortal,—av she'll say 'pais' to me, I'll take the eyes out of her,—the durty sthrap!"

"Och, och, but my heart is sore for the dear child!"

"Ah, ma'am, my poor boy would be burned to death on the street but for Barney Hanlon, that rushed out an' folded his coat round him."

"May the kind hand of Almighty God be about him for that same!"

"An' they tuk him away to the Infirmary,—an' there he lies now, at death's door,—for he's not expected to live from hour to hour. . . . An', oh, ma'am, dear,—they'll not let me see my own poor boy!"

"Oh, the flinty villains!"

"Ah, Mistress Sullivan, dear,—it was the heavy stroke

was waitin' for me when I got home wid my basket that day ! Arrah, wasn't it the mercy o' God that I didn't lose my sinses entirely ! Oh, to think o' me away on the streets, shoutin' 'Fresh Herrin',' an' joking and collougin' wi' the customers, from house to house, while my poor child was burnin' to death on the street. Oh, *weirasthrue*, but my heart's broke within me, this heavy day ! . . . But, I must be goin' on wi' the fish, for I want to get home."

"Arrah, Biddy woman, what 'ud ye do goin' about wid fish this day ? Sure, don't we want all the fish, an' more,—an' we havin' company ? . . . See, now,—take that, an' take the basket, an' hie away home to the childer ; an' I'll be after ye, Biddy, dear, before an hour is over."

"Ah, Mistress Sullivan,—may the good God of heaven reward ye, both here and hereafter, for all your kindness to me an' mine ! Glory be to God for the goodness He scatters upon the sorrowful path ! Ah, ma'am, may the kind heavens smile upon all ye take in hand ; an' that ye may never know an unhappy hour to your dyin' day !"





The Old Coal Man.

(AN IRISH TALE.)

CHAPTER I.

I woll you telle a litel thing in prose.

CHAUCER.

(Time, a winter night.—Place, the kitchen of the “Brid an’ Bantlin’.”—Persons, OLD SAM, the landlord, BOCKIN, and BILLY TWITTER, the bird-stuffer, seated about a round table at the fireside.)

“**W**ELL, Twitter, owd brid,—aught fresh?”

“Not mich. . . . My faithur wur sayin’
’at they’d had a meetin’ this forenoon to see
what colour th’ church schoo’ wur to be whitewashed.”

“Well, an’ how wenten they on?”

“Oh, it’s to be yollo,—an’ my faither’s gotten th’ job.”

“Wheer’s that owd’s lass o’ yor’s livin’ at now?” said the landlord.

“Hoo lives no wheer, now,” replied Twitter, “hoo’s gotten wed.”

"Oh, I see. House o' their own, I guess?"

"Ay."

"O Billy!" continued the landlord, "tell thi faither that I say he isn't a mon of his word. I met him th' last Thursday, an' he never coom; but tell him that I'll meet him again o' Satterday, whether he's theer or not."

"That just favours mi faither. I'll tell him."

.
"Mally," said Bockin, flinging one leg over the other, "bring a tot o'th owd mak. . . . Trade's bad again, I believe. Owd Bung says 'at folk wur beginnin' o' hangin' their pouches terribly i'th town."

"Ay," replied the landlord, "an' he'd hang his pouch, too, if he wur losin' his own brass."

.
"Bit o' good coal, Sam," said Bockin, pointing to the fire with his pipe.

"Middlin'."

"Wheer doesto get 'em?"

"Knat Bonk."

"How are they, now?"

"Risen again."

"Again! By th' mass, they'n be as dear as potitos in a bit. I'll tell tho what, Sam, they'n rise an' rise till they be out o' th' reitch o' folk o'together."

"Nay, they'n never do that. But as long as there's three customers waitin' for every barrow-full 'at comes up,—they'n never come down. They'n be no chepper till you can get moore coal than folk wanten."

"Ay, I guess it is so," replied Bockin. "But by th' mass, thoose that liven fro hond to mouth, han bin terribly nipt for firin' this winter."

.

Here a new customer came shivering into the kitchen, and creeping quietly to a chair on the opposite side of the fire, he called for a glass of ale. He was a thin, careworn man, something past middle age; and there was an air of settled melancholy upon his intelligent countenance. He was dressed in threadbare black, stained here and there, and shiny at the elbows and knees; and the tattered cuffs of his coat, and ill-concealed repairs of his clothing, bespoke the painful struggles of a poverty-stricken state. He had dropt in on his way over the moors from a neighbouring town, where he had been seeking orders for some book that was "coming out in numbers." Overtaken by age and misfortune, that was the only resource of his lonely decline. His sunken chest, and hollow cough, told that the poor pilgrim was the prey of some deep-seated disease, which was hastening him on to the last resting-place of the weary and heavy-laden. With his tot of ale upon the hob beside him, he sat in the shade, trying to fill a little black pipe with the crumbled relics of a pennyworth of tobacco, twisted in a bit of paper.

The three cronies on the opposite side of the fire sat smoking silently, and watching the old man with kindly eyes.

"Cold night," said he, pressing the last crumb of tobacco in his half-filled pipe.

"Bitter," replied Bockin, "bitter. Here, owd lad," continued he, flinging his tobacco-box across, "thou'll find a bit o' some'at i' that. Sup up, an' have a gill wi' me. Have it fettle't; it'll do tho moor good. Mally, bring him a pint,—an' fettle it."

There was a thoughtful pause for a few minutes during which Mally brought the old man his drink; and then little Twitter began again.

"Talkin' about coals, Sam," said he, "by the good Katty, thou should see th' women i'th' fowd, trailin' up an' down, an' dartin' at every naplin' at shakes off th' carts as they come fro th' pit."

"Ay," replied Bockin, "an' it's hard wark for poor folk this cowl weather."

By this time the stranger in the opposite corner was beginning to get warmer. Drawing his chair nearer, he set his feet upon the fender, and spreading his hands before the fire, he looked thoughtfully into the glowing grate.

"That's reet, owd lad," said Bockin; "poo up. How are coals yo'r gate on?"

The stranger coughed; and, after he had wiped his face with a bit of tattered handkerchief, he replied, "Well, all that I know about it is that I can never get fire enough to warm myself, unless I go into a public-house. But then, you see, I'm only a lodger. I'm a stranger in these parts. I have no relations alive,—and very few friends,—and what friends I have are poor folk. I occupy two little rooms in a cottage belonging to a family of working people. My

landlady is an Irishwoman, and her husband is a journeyman joiner, and an Englishman. They are very decent people, and as they have no children, it suits me very well. I hear them complaining, day by day, about the price of coals; especially when I ask for a little more upon the fire in my room. But, while you were talking, it brought to mind a thing that happened when I was at home the other day."

The three in the opposite corner were beginning to feel a growing interest in the old man and his story.

"Oh, ay," said Bockin, shifting his chair, and taking a pull at the pitcher; "oh, ay, what wur that?"

"Ay, let's have it," said the bird-stuffer, putting his little finger into the bowl of his pipe; "let's have it. Here, Mally, bring a bit moor 'bacco; an' fill th' owd lad his tot again."

And then they settled themselves into attention for the stranger's story.

CHAPTER II.

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long
That it had its head bit off by its young;
Then out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

KING LEAR.

"**D**OESTO yer, lass," said the landlord, "gi' this hearth a bit of a touch."

Mally mended the fire, and tidied up with the brush; and then, with her knitting in her hand, she sat down amongst the rest, to listen to the story.

"Weet thi' whistle afore tho starts, owd brid," said Bockin.

After another fit of coughing, the stranger put the ragged bit of handkerchief into his hat, and began:—

"The street where I live is not far from the heart of the city; and yet it is very quiet, except when some organ-grinder comes and plays for an hour together at the same tunes, till he gets tired of looking round at the empty windows, and goes lounging away, with his box on his back, glaring from side to side, as if he was fully bent on murdering the first inhabitant of that quarter that he could meet with in the dark. There is very little noise of any other kind, except what is made by folks who come about selling fish, and watercresses, and such like things; the prattle of children, playing about the doors; and the distant rumble of omnibuses and cabs. There is no outlet at our end of the street. It is a little island of quietness amidst the roaring ocean around. It is a favourite roosting-place of the city sparrows. After daring raids into the bustling highway beyond, they are glad to come back there, to sleep in peace with their young. And when twilight steals over the stilling streets, we can hear them twittering down to rest under the eaves.

"The other day I sat reading in my little room, when a knock came to the front door that made the whole house jump. The landlady ran up the lobby; and then I heard an old man say, 'Is this the house that I'm takin' the coals to?' There was no mistake about his being an Irishman; and I could see through the window that he was a short, shrivelled man, with thin white hair; and he held the handle

of a little cart which contained two hundred weight of coals. 'Is this the house that I'm takin' the coals to?' said he. 'Well, indeed, then, it is,' replied she, 'barrin' that the coals may be for some one else.' 'Arrah, thin,' said the old man, 'I forget the name all out, wi' the fright I got from a horse in the street beyant there; but I dragged them divuls far enough, any way; an', av it's plazing to ye, ma'am, I'd be delighted to lave them where they are, for I am tired o' their company.' 'All right,' said she; and the old man pulled up the grid, and began to slutter the coals down into the cellar. 'You're Irish,' said my landlady, as she handed him the money for the coals. 'Indeed, ma'am,' replied he, 'that's true for ye,—glory be to God!—an' bad luck to the day I left the place where I was born! At the same time, mind ye, no disparagement to this country in the laste,—barrin' that I'm not at home.' 'An' what part of Ireland d'ye come from?' said she. 'Well, indeed, ma'am,' replied the old man, 'my parents came from county Mayo; but they left that airly in life, and settled in the town o' Belfast, where I was born.' 'An' what made ye lave Belfast?' continued she. 'Begorra, ma'am,' replied he, 'ye may well say that; for when I was at home, amongst my own people, I was in full an' plinty, wid lashins an' lavins to the fore. I kept a shop, an' was well-to-do; an' I had frinds high an' low, an' was respected; an' divul a one could say "black's your nail" to me. More bi token I reared five boys an' a girl, an' gev them the best o' larnin',—an' I gev two o' the boys trades; an' it's myself that carried a bold head forninst the wide world, for I wastn't beholden to man, woman, or child for the loan of a shilling. Musha, ma'am,

but I had the ball at my foot in thim days. But, indeed, indeed, it's not in the power o' mortal man to know what's lyin' in wait beyant the passin' hour,—glory be to God! Well, time went on, an' the childer grew up, bright an' brave, without speck or flaw; an' myself an' the wife were as happy as the day is light. Ah, ma'am, when I look back, it's like an illigant drame to me now! Well, well,—in the manetime, the boys got news o' the big wages in England, an' two o' them started off to Manchester in sarch o' work; an' bedad, they done so well that the rest o' them soon followed after; an' the wife an' the wee cutty was all that was left to me. An' oh, it's well I remember, it was not aisy partin' wi' the crayturs,—barrin' that I thought it was for their own good,—an' so, hopin' that the hand o' the Lord might be about them, I let them go. But oh, indeed, ma'am, if ever ye parted from thim was dear as light an' life to ye, it's yourself'll be able to know how lonely we felt when they were gone. Ah, many's the sore heart-ache we had, sittin' our lone,—the wife an' I,—about thim that was far away in a strange land. An', at the heel of the day, she would be rockin' in the corner, wi' the big tears chasin' down her cheeks, as if her heart would break. “Arrah, acushla,” says I, “don't be takin' it so hard. Sure the boys is doin' well; an' the same God is over them in England was over them in Ireland.” An' all the while, d'ye mind, divul a one o' me could keep the water from my eyes, for the same raison. . . . Well, anyhow, time still wint on, an' grand letters began to come from the boys, sayin' how well they were doin' in England; an' beggin' for us to go over an' see them. An' oh, the promises they made if I

would only go. An' oh, the letters they sint! Bedad, ma'am, it was all roses an' crame, an' goold galore! Well, I'm not aisy deluded, now; but my heart was drawn over to see the lads; an' when Christmas was nigh, the wife persuaded me to bundle an' go; for, d'ye see, she was still frettin' about them,—more bi token, that poor Ted, the youngest, was the light of his mother's eye. So, at linth,—well I remember the day; there was deep snow on the ground; she packed me off, bag an' baggage,—clane shirts, an' turkey eggs, an' duck eggs, an' farles o' oaten bread, an' fadge; for, d'ye see, the boys complained that they couldn't get anything but soft bread in England. Well, amongst the rest, I'll engage she didn't forget to pack up two stout bottles of Inishone. So, one cold evening, I tuk the staymer to Fleetwood, an' from Fleetwood I tuk the train; but, begorra, after that, a man might write a book in regard to the way I was scattered about the country, from one town to another, among strangers, that were takin' rises out o' me at every turn. Oh, indeed, it was the greatest divar-sion in life,—when it was over. An' then, don't ye see, ma'am, if the towns had all been drawn up in line forninst me, like a troop o' dragoons on parade, I wouldn't be able to tell which was which. How-an-ever, at last, wi' the help o' God, after losin' my whisky,—an' my temper,—an' my sinses,—I landed safe amongst the boys; standin' brave, in my own skin. And, indeed, ma'am, it was then the row began! Oh, ma'am, dear, the spoort there was is beyant the tongue o' man to tell. Divul receave the better entertainment an angel could have had than I met with among the crayters. Oh, Mary, Mary, mother dear, but it's I that

was the happiest man in the world,—that has only two legs! I was at Jem's one night; I was at Pat's another night; and I was at Jem's sweetheart's the next night; for, d'ye see, they lived in different parts o' the town, bi the way o' being contagious to their work. Well, by dad, it's little rest I had by night or by day. They tuk me here, an' they tuk me there; an' it was all aitin', an' drinkin', an' spoortin', an' ridin', an' rollin' about, from mornin' to night. What with gardens, an' ale-houses, an' singin'-rooms, an' theaytres, an' this an' that,—bi mi sowkins, it put me astray entirely. Oh, mille murther,—the singin', *an'* the dancin',—*an'* the plays,—I seen three plays,—an',—mind I'm tellin' ye,—I never seen the like before, nor since! An' thin, wherever I wint, everybody seemed to be livin' in full an' plinty, an' nobody seemed to be workin'; an' faith, thinks I, the boys'll never look behind them more! An' so the rollick wint on; an' I might have stayed longer, but for the wee cutty writin' letters, sayin' that her mother was onaisy about me; an' beggin' that I would go home, for the praties were all sold out in the shop. An' then I began to take myself aside,—and think. So, one mornin' I says to the boys, "Boys," says I, "this'll not howd water. I must go home to mi work, an' you must get to yours." At last I got lave to go; an', oh, av ye seen the dust was raised! Oh, holy waiver,—av ye seen it! Bi my soul, there was as many people to see me away as if it was Pontius Pilate, or the King o' Mesapotamia, takin' lave of his subjects,—the one half o' them blind drunk. Faith, ye'd think I was going to Aigypht! An' "oh, father, dear," says little Ted, "ye'll bring my mother over to England, won't ye, now?" An'

“Arrah, father,” says Jem, “av ye’ll come over an’ live with us ye’ll never see another black day. We’ll pay the rint for yees, an’ divul a stroke ye’ll do but walk the streets, wid your hands in your pockets,—like any other gentleman. Arrah, father,” says he, “you’re an old man now, an’ why wouldn’t we pay the rint for yees,—an’ we young an’ strong, an’ rollin’ in wealth! Oh, *weirasthrue*, father dear, sell up the shop, an’ bring my mother over to live with us!” An’ musha, ma’am, but it was a great timptation, that same thought of us all livin’ together; so I promised,—I dunno what. How-an’-ever, I tuk lave o’ the crayturs; an’ bi my soul, there was a shower o’ water in every eye,—not forgettin’ my own,—when I came away. An’ so,—wid my heart pullin’ both ways,—I tuk the boat for Ireland. It was a stormy night; an’ oh, av ye seen the tossin’, an’ the washin’, an’ the rollin’ we got on the say! Bad luck to the sleep I slept that mortial night, for I was say-sick the whole o’ the time. Begorra, ma’am, I thought the inside was takin’ lave o’ me entirely; an’ indeed, little matter for that, for I expected every minute that I’d be interred in the say, without bell, book, or candle,—before I was dead. Well, well, it’s yourself may say that I was the tired man, when I landed at the pier o’ Belfast, sick, sore, an’ sorry, an’ glad to set my foot upon anything that didn’t roll. Well, indeed, ye may think, ma’am, the wife was glad to see me. “Oh, Dennis, dear,” says she, “don’t lave me my lone again, will ye, darlin’? I’ve not long to live; an’ I cannot bear it!” “Acushla, dear,” says I, “naither land or water shall ever part us more!” Well, ma’am, the days wint on, an’ when I got the sickness out o’ mi bones, I up an’ told her what the

boys said about us livin' wi' them in England. But, divul a word would she listen to. "Arrah, Dennis," says she, "why would we lave Ireland? Why would we lave the place where the childer were born an' reared for thirty years? Sure we know where we are, but we'll not know where we're going to. An' indeed," says she, "small the better yourself looks, after spendin' your tin pound in England." So, I kep a calm sough, an' we settled down in the old way for a while ; but, indeed, to my dyin' day, I'll repint that ever I gev in to her when she changed her mind. An' this was the way of it, d'ye see. About mid-summer we got a letter from the eldest boy,—he was a mechanic by trade,—an' he got an appointment to go out to Amerikay,—an' nuthun would sarve but he must see his mother before he crossed the say. Well, ma'am, the mother's heart tuk a lep at the news,—an' away she started, hot foot, wi' the colleen, for England ; lavin' me behind, d'ye see, to mind the shop. Well,—wi' the help o' God,—the two o' them landed safe an' sound ; an' after seeing Pat off to Amerikay, they stayed wi' the rest o' the boys well nigh a month,—livin' in clover. Arrah, it was then they put the comether on the craytur, entirely ; an' she came back to Belfast more dazzled an' bewildered wi' the splendour than I was myself. Och, och, the glitterin' talk that was scattered about ! The boys was to pay the rint, an' I was to walk about idle an' aisy ; and divul a hand's turn the wife was to do but make tay an' keep the buttons on the shirts ; an' oh, *ma-horp-andiaoul*, ma'am, but ye'd swear the bread was buttered on both sides for us till we were carried home to the daisies. Well, well, the mother's heart was in it, an', for the matter

o' that, so was mine. She gave me no rest, bi night or day, till we left Belfast. So, to make a long story short, I sold up house an' shop, horse an' cart, dish an' spoon, an' came to England. An' indeed, ma'am, we found that it was a nate little house they'd taken for us up the road, convanient. Well, mi dear, they paid the rint from week to week, an' all wint on well for a while, till Ted, the youngest boy,—he was a tin-plate worker,—was out of his apprenticeship, an' he began to get big wages, beside overtime. Well, d'ye see, on a Saturday night, the boys used to meet in our place; an' one night, when we were all sittin' cosy round the fire, the eldest boy looks at Ted, an' says he, "Faith, Ted, you're gettin' big wages now. It's not fair that we two should be payin' my father's rint, an' you doin' nothin' towards it." "Bedad," replies Ted, "I never was the one to persuade my father an' mother to lave the place where they were doin' well!" An' no more he was, for d'ye see, he was only a 'prentice then. "Well, but," says the eldest again, "you've only yourself, an' I have a wife an' child,—an' likely for more." "An' sure," says Ted, "how d'ye know but I'm going to have a wife myself! Sure you've got a grand house o' furniture of your own, an' I've all my furniture to buy." An' so they wint on jawin', from one thing to another. An' all the while I was keepin' my eye on the wife, as she sat by the fire, quietly rakin' in the ashes, an' lookin' down, wi' the gray locks stragglin' about her face; an' indeed, I saw that she didn't like it. At last I could stand it no longer. So I jumped up on the floor, an' I said, "Boys; the divul o' one o' ye'll ever pay my rint any more, from this to my dyin' day! It's myself that has

given yees all good edication, an' good trades, an' yees drifted away the minute ye were able to do for yourselves. It was your own persuasion that brought me here. An' sure, it's mighty soon ye're repentin' o' your bargain, mi darlins! But—hear me now!—from this hour I have done with it! For whilst I have thim tin old fingers at the ind o' mi arms, I'll naither be beholden to young or old o' yees!"

. . . An' oh, ma'am, dear, from that hour the world began to go wrong wid me an' mine. The light o' the day was over, an' darkness gathered deeper an' deeper about the old wife an' me. Mi childer tuk wing, an' we were left alone. Jem quarrelled wid his wife, an' he went to Australia; an' I never heard scrap nor line of him from that day to this. The other boy 'listed into the army, an' was killed in the great war. An' poor Ted,—arrah, it's he that had the bold timper o' the rale owld stock in him,—one night Ted was drinkin' wid a few frinds from over the water; an' they got to high words; an' one o' them tuk Ted a rap on the head wid a bit of a stick; an' thin,—wid the gratest punctuality in life,—Ted replied to him wid a trifle of a poker, that was lyin' convanient; an' bedad, ma'am, the durty rap tuk the opportunity o' dyin' that same night; an' my own poor boy was left to stand the brunt o' the whole thing; for, d'ye see, they tuk the law on him; an' now, poor Ted is sarvin' his time out beyant the say. Oh, *Veeha Vaugh!* (Virgin Mother) will I ever live to behold my own brave boy again? . . . An' then, when I thought the *miau* an' the *miroch* (the sorrow and trouble) had done their worst on me, the wife an' the colleen tuk the fayver, an' they both died in one week; an' they are lyin' together

now, in the chapel-yard, over beyant there. . . . An' oh, ma'am, but that I haven't the heart to lave the place where they are lyin', I'd like to go back to Ireland to die. . . . Ah, ma'am, the weight was too heavy on me for a while; an' I lost heart entirely, an' began to wander. . . . An' ye see me now, ma'am, a poor old shaky *shingawn* (little man), livin' my lone, among strangers. My sight is failin' fast; an' I am airnin' my solitary bread by trailin' coals through the streets from the yard over by; an' not one kind hand o' my own kin left to close my eyes at last. An' indeed, indeed, ma'am, I'll not be sorry,—glory be to God!—when the blessed hour comes that I may be laid down to rest wi' them that's waitin' for me in the little yard beyant!"

"And then," said the stranger, "the old man went his way. I watched him as he passed the window, trailing his empty cart through the rain; and I felt that I had seen the last of him. My landlady closed the door, and, as she came up the lobby, wiping her eyes, she said, 'Poor old fellow; the one half o' the world doesn't know how the other half lives.'"

.

"Maister," said the landlady, addressing the stranger in the corner, "han yo far to goo?"

"About six miles."

"Stop wheer yo are, till mornin'. We'n find yo a good bed."

"Ay," said the landlord, "an' get us a bit o' supper ready."

"I will," replied she.

"An', doesto yer, lass?"

"Well."

"Do us a potito."

"I will."

"I'll tell yo what, Mally," said Bockin, "as yo are gooin' to start o' cookin', I feel as if I could like a bit o' some'at mysel'. Here, Billy," continued he, addressing the bird-stuffer, "thou'rt generally th' hungry side out, have a bit o' supper wi' me."

"By th' mass," replied the bird-stuffer, "I'm ready for tho, ony minute! If yo're o' beawn to start, I'll start too; for I haven't had a bite o' nought sin we had that lobscouse at 'Th' Hare an' Hounds' at noon, nobbut two buttered moufins, an' a hondful o' scallions."

.

It was a merry meal, and there were good trenchermen around the board. For an hour or so after supper was over, "the night drave on, wi' sangs an' clatter," but before the clock in the kitchen had struck eleven, Bockin and his companions were trickling homeward, down the moorside, by the light of the stars; the inmates of the "Brid an' Bantlin'" were sound asleep; and the night-wind played audibly with sleepy sough, around the old moorland inn.





The Twelve Apostles.

(AN IRISH ANECDOTE.)

"I will tell thee, friend Sancho," answered Don Quixote, "that it is as certain they are asses as that I am Don Quixote and thou Sancho Panza; at least, so they seem to me." "Sir," quoth Sancho, "say not such a thing; but snuff those eyes of yours."

CERVANTES.

(Two friends at dinner, at the hotel.)



OME, Harry, you're not doing much. I like to see a man take his pound and his pint."

"I'm off my feed, Jack."

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, the weather, I suppose. Wet and warm, like Oldham brewis. It unlaces me from top to toe."

"But you've not finished?"

"Finished! I had done before I begun. Here, waiter, take away."

"Come along to the smoke room."

"I'm ready."

.

“Well, now, you promised to tell me about your fellow-traveller, and his landing at Dublin.”

“Oh, ay! Well, I had noticed him particularly as we went across on the boat; for he was a ‘ken-speckle’ sample of the Lancashire breed; and, though a man of few words, there was a merry twinkle in his eye; and every time he opened his mouth, his speech told the land of his birth at once. This was his first trip across the sea, and he was disguised in a new suit, which he evidently did not feel quite at home in. Somehow, we got very thick together on the boat, and we had a good deal of chat in the old dialect. I missed him in the bustle when we came to the pier; but I met with him afterwards, in the city, where he dined with me; and, as we sat over a glass of grog, he gave me an account of his reception on landing.

“But, in the first place, you know how the Irish car-drivers crowd down to meet the arriving boats; and how full of devil-may-care rollick and fun they are. When the luggage comes ashore, they have a trick of seizing the best pieces they can lay hands on; and when the owner comes up, the fiend is in it if they do not talk him on to a car, before he knows where he is.

“By-the-bye, my fellow-traveller’s name was Barker. Well, one of the car-men, attracted by the appearance of Barker’s trunk, grabbed it once, and, after carefully spelling out the name, B, a, r, bar, k, e, r, ker,—Bar-ker,—he cried out, ‘Where the divil’s Mister Barker?’ Barker, hearing his name shouted in a strange land, looked round with surprise, and seeing Paddy dragging the trunk towards the car, he cried, ‘Here, wheer arto for? Stop an’ rosin! That’s

mine !' 'Ah, Mister Barker !' said Paddy, saluting our friend, 'welcome to ould Ireland, Mister Barker ! Sure, I was lookin' out for ye this three weeks ! Good luck to ye, Mister Barker !' 'Well,' replied Barker, 'this gi's my crop a twist ; I don't know how thae comes to know what I'm code (called) ; for I never set fuut upo' this clod i' my life afore.' 'Ah, now, Mister Barker,' answered Paddy, 'don't be sayin' that to your own car-boy ! Sure, didn't I smell ye on the boat.' 'Well,' said Barker, scratching his head, 'this caps my trash, owd lad, I tell thee again ; for I never were here afore,—that shall be true,—an' thae keeps Barkerin', an' Barkerin', as if thee an' me had bin twins. I cannot make it out.' 'Ah, come along, your honour,' replied Paddy ; 'sure, it's myself knew the whole seed, breed, an' generation o' the Barkers before ye were born !' Well ; Barker followed slowly, wondering how on earth Paddy came to have his name so pat at the end of his tongue. 'Now, jump up, your honour,' said Paddy, 'till I show ye the way we'll roll along !' 'Stop a minute,' said Barker, 'let's have a look at th' horse. Hello ! That'll do noan ! It's nobbut three legs !' 'Faith, ye are right,' replied Paddy ; 'an' it's just as well, for if he had four I wouldn't be able to hold him.' 'By th' mon,' said Barker, laughing, 'I's be like to have a ride wi' thee, owd lad, legs or no legs ! But, howd,' continued he, laying his hand on Paddy's shoulder, 'I want tho to tell me th' names o' some o' th' main buildin's, as we riden by.' 'Well, indeed, then,' replied Paddy, 'here's the one boy that's able for that, Mister Barker.' 'Well, then,' said Barker, as he mounted the car, 'off witho ; an' mind thae tells no lies i' thi talk ;

for thae'rt terrible lennock (pliant, glib) about th' tung ; an' it's quare to me if thae artn't a bit leet gi'n, bi th' look on tho. Nea then ; get agate o' rollin', as soon as tho likes.' 'Where will I drive to, your honour?' 'Thae may just plez (please) thy bonny sel', replied Barker. 'Keep drivin' up an' down, till I tell tho to stop.' 'All right, your honour,' replied Paddy, giving the horse a switch ; 'all right ! Get along, out o' that, ye divil !' And away they went. 'I'll tell tho what, owd lad,' said Barker, leaning forward on the car, 'that's a quare mak (make) of a crayter 'at thae's gotten between thoose shafts.' 'Is it the horse, your honour?' inquired Paddy. 'Ay, if it be a horse,' replied Barker ; 'but it favvours a seck-full o' fire-irons as much as a horse. What doesto co' it?' 'Loightning, your honour.' 'Leetnin' ! ay, well ; it looks as if it had bin brought up o' moonshine an' yure-pins. Leetnin' ! I never see'd a three-legged flash o' leetnin' afore ! Is it a mare?' 'It is, your honour.' 'Why, then, thae'll be havin' a spavin't thunner-bowt i'th' shafts some o' these days. . . . Howd, stop ! What's yon buildin', i'th' front, yon ?' 'That's the Parliamint Heawse, your honour.' 'Why ; han yo a parliamint here ?' 'Faith, no, Mister Barker ; they took the parliamint over the water ; but they left the heawse behind.' 'Well ; an' what's yon buildin', with three stone figures stonnin' o' th' top, yon ?' 'Is it thim three bowld fellows, on the top o' the buildin', beyant there?' 'Ay ; what's thoose three ?' 'Thim three, your honour,—thim three's the Twelve Apostles !' 'Twelve Apostles ! Heaw doesto manage to make twelve out o' thoose three ?' 'Well, indeed, Mister Barker ; ye couldn't expect the whole twelve

to be out at once, such a murderin' wet day as this. The other nine are gone in to dry their clothes !'

" 'Poo up !' cried Barker ; 'Poo up ! Thae's gone fur enough, at once ! Let's goo in, somewheer, an' sit us down a minute or two. ' "





Dennis : or the Irish Oyster Man.

IT was a stormy day ; and we were a little mixed company, who had rushed into the old-fashioned wayside for shelter. We had gathered round the fire, and wore into friendly talk together, when the door opened, and a genial, humorous face looked in. It was a bright-eyed, middle-aged man, shining all over with wet. A blue woollen apron was twisted round his waist, and he had a basket on his arm. Leaning against one door-cheek, and sticking a knife into the other, he said, as he glanced through the window at the rattling shower,—

“By gobs ; didn’t I get a fine peltin’ out o’ that ! Holy waiver ! I’m drenched to the skin ! Feel at mi coat ! . . . Do yees want any oysters, gentlemin ? The shells is small,” said he, stepping forward, “but they’re chock-full o’ the finest fish in the world. Divul a aigual thim has in the wild ocean ! Mind, I’m tellin’ yees ! . . . Taste that ! Bedad, that’s a mouthful for a king !”

“Hollo, Dennis !” said one of the company, “how is it that you are not in your own town to-day ?”

"Well, indeed then," replied Dennis, "it's because I'm here, I suppose. Begorra, ye couldn't expect a man to be in two places at once,—barrin' he was a burd. But, maybe then, it's good fortin' sent me here to meet wid a few rale gentlemin. Glory be to God!—it's the likes o' them 's the relief o' the world. . . . Sorra the soul I met on my way this two mile,—barrin' the rain, pourin' down in lashins,—till the oysters in my basket began to think they were in the say again."

"Well, Dennis," said the traveller, "I'll have a score if you'll tell us about the Irishman in the Lancashire cook's shop."

"Ye will? Thin divul recaive the toe I'll stir till ye get both! . . . Will you take another score, sir, till I tell the tale? Faith, it's little chance ye'll have o' meetin' wid the like o' thim oysters again, for they're gettin scarce. Mind, I'm tellin' ye! . . . An' now for the tale," continued he, with his knife and his tongue going together. . . . "It was a man from Nenagh, in Tipperary,—he was a kind of ganger on the railway,—and he went to a cook's-shop in a little Lancashire town, and he says to the mistress o' the house, says he, 'A basin o' soup, ma'am, plaze,' says he,—for, mind ye, an Irishman's natteraly polite till he's vext, an' then he's as fiery as Julius Sayzur. Well; when she brought the soup, Paddy tuk a taste, mighty sly; an' turnin' reawnd, says he,—just for spoort, mind,—says he, 'Bedad, ma'am, yer soup tastes mighty strong o' the water.' Well, av coorse, the woman was vext all out, an' she up an' towld him he didn't understand good aitin' an' drinkin',—an' he might lave the soup for thim that had been better

edicated. But bowld Paddy wint on widout losin' a stroke o' the spoon ; an',—purtindin' not to hear her,—ses he, 'I'll go bail I'll make as good broth as thim wid a penny candle an' a trifle o' pepper.' Well, by gobs, this riz the poor woman's dander to the full hoight, an' she made right at him wid her fist, an' swore by this an' by that, if he didn't lave the heawse she'd knock him into the boiler. But Paddy was nigh finishin' his soup, an' he made up his mind to take the last word ; an' ses he, 'Bi the powers ! that'll be the best bit o' mate ever went into your pan, ma'am ;' an' wi' that, he burst into a laugh, an' the philanderin' rogue up an' towld her how he said it all for divarshun ; an' divul a better soup he tasted in his life. Well, she changed her tune, like a child. By dad, it was like playin' a piano or a flute, or somethin'. An' mind ye, there's nothin' like an Irishman for gettin' the right music out ov a woman,—all the world over. So my tale's ended, an' I'd like to see the bottom o' my basket. Ye may as well brake me, gentlemen. There's not more nor five score. Take the lot, an' let me go home ; for I've a long step to the fore, an' I'm wet to the bone, an' the roads is bad after dark."

After a good deal of pleasantry, Dennis got rid of his oysters in the hotel ; and, as the storm was still raging without, he called for a glass, just, as he said, "to keep the damp away from the spark in his heart ; more by token that he had no other fire to dry his clothes at. But, begorra, for the matter o' that," said he, "they're not worth a grateful o' coals. Look at my trowsers. They're on the verge o' supperannuation ; an' they'll require a substitute before

long, or else, I'm thinking, they'll not combine daycently. How-an'-ever, gentlemen," continued he, "here's hopin the fruition ov your purses may never fail ye, nor health to consign their contents to utility. An' neaw," said he, lighting his pipe, and putting the empty basket on his head like a cowl, "I must go, iv the rain comes in pailfuls, for I'm not over well ; and if I could get home wid wishin' I'd be in bed by the time ye'd say 'trap-sticks !' But dramin' and schamin's neither ridin' nor flyin', so I'll be trampin', for there's no more use in wishin' than there would be in a doctor feeling a man's pulse through a hole in a wall wid the end ov a kitchen poker. An' neaw, I'll be proud iv any gintleman would oblige me by comin' a couple o' mile an the road ; to see the way I'll spin over the greawnd. . . . Ye'd rather not ? Well, fun an' fine weather's not always together, so good bye, an' long life to ye, an' here's wishing that your appetites an' your mate may be close companions and good frinds ; an' that yees may never die in child-bed !" and so, away went Dennis through the rain towards Fleetwood.





To Paddy's Land.

CHAPTER I.

Buried and cold, when this heart stills its motion,
Green be thy fields, dearest isle of the ocean,
Thy harp-striking bards singing loud with emotion,
"Erin, mavourneen, slan laght go bragh!"

CAMPBELL.

MY heart always beats warmly towards old Ireland;
and my pulse quickened with delight, one cloudy
morning in the middle of August, as I bundled
up once more for a trip to the emerald gem of the western
sea, crooning to myself, as I buckled the straps of my port-
manteau, Tom Moore's tender wail—

Wert thou all I could wish thee, great, glorious, and free,
First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea,
I might hail thee with prouder and happier brow,
But, oh, could I love thee more dearly than now.

.
More dear in thy sorrow, thy gloom, and thy showers,
Than the rest of the world in its sunniest hours.

"Barney," said I to the Irish boots at the hotel, "can

you get a cab here in a quarter of an hour?" "I can, sur."
"Away with you, then." "Will I come back inside it, sur?" "If you like." "All right, sur; I'll have it at the dure in a brace of shakes!" Away went Barney, helter-skelter, for he was a good-natured, humorous affectionate fellow, full of wild emotions; and he would go through fire and water for anybody who was kind to him. Away went Barney through the water; for it was beginning to rain heavily; and, before the quarter of an hour was over the cab came rattling up, with Barney's round face smiling at the window. "Here ye are, sur," said he, jumping out of the cab and holding the door open for me. But, seeing my luggage piled up on the steps, he changed his tone. "Hullo; what's this?" said he. "Sure, ye're not goin' to lave us, sur?" "Only for a few days, Barney." "Ay, well, indeed thin, it's well to be you, sur!" "Why, Barney, why?" "Sure ye're always dramin' an' schamin',—an' if the laste thing tickles ye, away ye go, spoortin' about the world like a butterfly. . . . An' where will I say ye're goin' to, yer honour,—if anybody axes me?" "I'm goin' to Paddy's Land, Barney,—in Erin's Isle to sport a while." "Arrah, good luck to your honour's four bones. Bi mi soul, I wish ye wor takin' me back wid ye in your pocket, to my own land. Ah, bedad, its breakin' my heart I am, night an' day, dramin' about the green slope in county Wicklow, where I was born. Bad luck to me, what'll I do?" "Why, Barney, I thought you liked England?" "Ah, well then, your honour, England's well enough for thim that's born in it,—an' may the Lord keep thim in it, say I,—but I am an Irishman, your honour,—glory be to God,—an' I'd

rather be hanged in old Ireland than I'd live in England on ten thousand a year. Sure, I met wid kind friends in England; but the little churchyard where my father an' mother lie at rest wid the shamrock growin' over them will never lave my heart, an' if I could only live an' die upon the wild mountain side that looks down upon their graves, the best road in England to me would be the road out of it. But it's no use, your honour; for, as the song says, 'Fate will have her way, brave boys, let a man do what he can.' Sure, I wish your honour a pleasant journey, an' a safe return. An' maybe ye'll not be vext if I ax ye a small favour." "What's that, Barney?" "Well, indeed then, if ye would only bring me back a sprig o' shamrock, or a bit o' grass, or any green thing that grows in the old land, I'd prize it more than a lump o' gould; an' I'd be thankful to ye for evermore."

I shook hands with Barney, after he had seen the luggage right upon the cab; and we left him standing in the doorway with tears in his eyes as he saw me start for his native land.

"Where to?" said the driver, looking down from his seat.

"To Dublin!"

"What, o' th' road?"

"Well, no. Call at Victoria Station."

And away we rattled through the rain, down to the station at Hunt's Bank, which was throng with a weltering swarm of travellers looking after tickets and luggage, and darting to and fro, amid the din of whistles and wheels, like the interweaving threads of a chequered web. An old Irish-

woman was wandering about amongst the crowd with a few mauled greengage plums at the bottom of a crushed basket. "D'ye want any plums, sur? Ah, ye might buy them from me! Sure, there's not more nor a pound, an' I'm wantin' to go home." "How much are they a pound?" "They're sixpence a pound, sur; an' they're all I have! Ah, take them from me, sur; sure ye shall have them for fivepence!" I took the old woman's plums, and she pelted me with prayers as I walked away to the train. This reminded me that I was going to a land where for a matter of eighteen-pence a man can set a whole township of old women praying for his welfare. Surely a little kindness goes a long way with those that are ready to perish. Just as we got settled into our seats, and the train was ready to start, an incident happened which set everybody in our carriage into a good humour, except one. A buxom-looking country-woman had got into our carriage with a child in her arms, and, just before the train started, she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to get a ticket. In a fit of consternation she said to a stout, elderly man, who sat next to her, "Here, maister, wi'n yo be as good as tak howd o' this chylt a minute? I've forgotten my ticket!" The man took hold of the child, and away she went towards the office like a shot. In the meantime the tickets were examined, the doors were closed one after the other with a bang, and the whistle went for the train to start, and yet the woman had not returned. The man with the child in his arms began to perspire at every pore; and, when the porter came to lock the door, he started up in a fright, and cried out, "Heigh, stop! Oppen that dur. Let me get out! Wheer's th'

guard? Heigh; guard!" The guard came. "Heigh; guard; where's th' woman that owns this chylt?" "Nay; I don't know!" "Hoo asked me to stick to it while hoo went for her ticket!" "Well, time's up; we must be going!" "By ——; yo munnot goo till hoo comes back! It's noan o' my chylt!" "Well; an' it's not mine! . . . Come, get in; we must be off!" "Nay; I'll go noan till hoo comes! Here, stick to it a minute, till I goo an' look for her!" "Nay, nay," said the guard, laughing, "I've plenty o' that sort at our house! But we must be going. We can't wait any longer!" "Then, d—— yo, goo!" replied the poor fellow, wiping his forehead with his sleeve, "I'll not stir a peg till that woman turns up!" And we left him there upon the platform in a terrible sweat, looking helplessly to the right and left, and holding the poor child in his arms clumsily, as if it was a red-hot poker. This little incident afforded considerable amusement to the travellers in our carriage as we rolled over Chat Moss and by sulphuric Widnes, and over a large tract of sylvan Cheshire, till the bold height of Halton came in sight, with the ruined castle of John of Gaunt overlooking the Mersey, and the town of Runcorn, where they sell the famous "snig pies" at the ferry-house. By that time, my companions in the train had all dropt out one after the other, as we went along; and I was left alone to enjoy the flying landscape as we rolled along. At Chester, where we changed, I caught a glimpse of the ancient walls, and of the castle, and of the mouldering Water Tower, and of the winding Dee, whose waters in days gone by have borne many a proud armament to Erin's green shore. A few miles along the verdant sea-

washed plain of Flintshire brought us in sight of Hawarden Castle, finely situated upon high ground, amongst far-stretching woods, above which, the flag of the castle flying in the wind told the country around that the great statesman who dwells there was at home. At Chester a new set of travellers had entered the train, one of whom handed round the new-published volume of cartoons from *Punch*, showing the political career of the Earl of Beaconsfield; and railed in good set terms at the government of the day, its dishonourable tricks, and its audacious attacks upon the hard-won liberties of the land; whilst he complained bitterly that the spirit of England seemed to have fallen off since the days of Cromwell and of Hampden. "Nothing will teach them,—nothing will rouse them, now,—to a sense of the meaning of these things, but long-continued disaster,—and I fear that is not far off!" In the opposite corner sat a bright, good-humoured Irish student, who set us all laughing by saying, "Indeed then, I don't care if both England and Turkey were sunk in the Atlantic if old Ireland could get her rights!"

The evening came on calm and bright; and on we went between Conway Castle and rocky old Deganwy, the bold fortress of the early kings of North Wales. On, by Penman-maur, and Beaumaris, and ancient Bangor, and across the wild isle of Anglesea,—the last retreat of the Druids in Britain,—to Holyhead; where the boat was waiting to take us over to the Emerald Isle.

CHAPTER II.

Erin ! the tear and the smile in thine eyes,
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in thy skies !
Shining through sorrow's stream,
Saddening through pleasure's beam,
Thy suns, with doubtful gleam,
Weep while they rise.

Erin ! thy silent tear never shall cease,
Erin ! thy languid smile ne'er shall increase,
Till, like the rainbow's light,
Thy various tints unite,
And form in heaven's sight
One arch of peace !

MOORE.

IT was a lovely evening as the steamer churned away from Holyhead. And I was glad to go ; for it seemed to me a particularly dull spot. Its only pleasant feature was that it led to somewhere else. The sky was cloudless ; the air was clear and cool ; and the wind was still as we left the lessening land behind us. Looking back when we had got a few miles to sea, there was a fine view of the Welsh mountains, rolling in great waves along the eastern horizon,—like a petrified storm. They grew bluer and bluer, for a while, as they receded from view ; till, at last, they died away in the grey shade of advancing twilight. Stretching myself out upon a bench at the stern of the boat, I watched the flight of a solitary gull, which followed in our wake for more than an hour, till, at

last, I fell sound asleep; and when I woke up again I was as starved as an otter. This took me down below, where I had a chat with the steward, which helped to restore the circulation. Soon after this we came in sight of Howth Island (I find that the Irish people call it Hoath); and the view of Dublin bay, by the unclouded light of a full moon, as we steamed up between Howth Island and the long straggling lights of Kingstown, upon the opposite shore, was a picture for a man to hang carefully up in the gallery of his memory in a good light. As I paced the deck, delighted with the scene, one of the passengers came up to the mate of the boat, and said, "Did ye hear the row?" "No," replied the mate; "what is it?" "They're fighting like blazes down in the engine-room below there!" replied the passenger. "Divul a foight," said the mate, with a laugh; "divul a foight! Sure, it's only the way they talk! Bedad, if ye were to hear them sometimes, ye'd think they were cuttin' holes into one another!" The Liffey looked fine in the moonlight, with its crowded shipping and the lights of the city on each side. . . . It was near half-past ten when the steamer drew slowly up to the quay at North Wall. After some delay about the luggage,—which was all delivered together at a kind of "bar" in the station, where each man claimed his own,—I managed to wriggle a car out of the yelling crowd. "Where will I drive to, your honour?" "Drive to Jury's," said I, speaking at a venture, for I knew it was the time of the British Association's meeting in Dublin, and the hotels would be crowded,— "Drive to Jury's." "I will, sur," said the driver; and away went the car, bouncing over the cobble stones, with

the driver flourishing his whip and shouting to his wild horse, "Get out o' that ; quick, quick !"—whilst I, with an umbrella and a hat-box in one hand, held on like grim death with the other to a leather portmanteau, which jumped up and down upon the car like a pebble in a rolling barrel. But Paddy went ahead, heedless of everything behind him, whilst I and the portmanteau together bounded about on the car, sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes on the seat, sometimes half a yard above it, expecting every moment to be landed in the street. "That's shaken me up," said I, as I got down from the car. "It's good for the inside, sur," replied Paddy. We were in front of Jury's hotel, which is in the very heart of the city, and within five hundred yards of Trinity College and of the Bank of Ireland, which was formerly the Irish House of Parliament. At Jury's I found that the house was full, as I expected ; but it was eleven o'clock at night, and I should have just as bad a chance anywhere else in the city ; so they kindly offered to make up "a comfortable shake-down" for me in a room where another gentleman was sleeping ; and I was glad of anything in the shape of a clean resting place for the night. "Indeed," said the agreeable young lady at the bar, "the gentleman who is sleeping with you is a foine young fellow. He is an officer in the army, and,—he wouldn't hurt a floy !" After a mouthful of supper, which, through weariness and excitement, I couldn't eat,—though it was very good,—I dragged my limbs into the billiard-room, where I sat drowsily watching a hard contest between a smart young American and the expert marker of the inn. In a corner of the same room, near me, sat two elderly

men, who, although considerably splashed with whisky, seemed to be discussing some knotty point in theology. "Ye may say what ye like," said the more drunk of the two; "ye may say what ye like about purgatory being a necessary station in the journey of the sinful soul, but I wouldn't like to be callin' there!" "Well, indeed, then," replied the other, "ye might go farther and fare worse!" I sat up till past twelve in order to give the young officer time to get to sleep before I crept in after him. On stockinged feet I stole into the room, shading the candle with my hand,—like a burglar "at the silent midnight hour, when every sense and every power fettered lies in lonely sleep." It was a good room,—a sitting-room turned into a bedroom for the night,—and there he lay, on one of the two low, white-sheeted beds, which had been made up hastily to catch the overflow of custom. I glanced around. The room was littered with trunks, and gun cases, and other sporting gear. There he lay, seemingly asleep,—and, indeed, he was "a fine young fellow." His handsome face was tanned as a gipsy's; and his head was thickly thatched with curly hair, as black as the raven's wing. "He is asleep," thought I,—for he lay as still as "monumental alabaster,"—but, just as I was putting out the light, he turned an eye upon me from the side of his head, which reminded me of the lines in the Cheshire hunting song about Tom Rance, the one-eyed huntsman,—

Tom Rance has got a single eye,
Worth mony another's two,
An' when the fox had seen Tom's face,
He thought it time to goo."

But it was too late. I put out the light, and the reproachful glance of that young man's eye was wasted upon the midnight darkness. I crept into bed, and all was still. About half-past six I woke up. It was the young officer pacing about the room in his slippers, with his braces hanging about his heels. "I hope," said he, "that I didn't disturb you by rising at this unearthly hour!" We soon got into talk together, and, when I told him that I wished to see something of the south and west of Ireland, he grew quite enthusiastic, as, with the fervour of a lover of nature and a sportsman, he spoke of the many charms of "the Wild West," and especially of the country about Lough Corrib, "where the boatmen tell you all about the charmed fishes that stood on their tails in the frying-pan, and with one jump cleared houses, and fields, and all intervening objects, falling back into the dark pool from which they had been taken." He was evidently a man of cultivation and learning, acquainted with the history, and the songs, and the legends of his native island; and, after giving me a list of the chief places of interest in the south of Ireland, he said, with an air of pride, "I am an Irishman myself!"—for he seemed quite unconscious of the fact that his face, and his speech, and his whole deportment, had already unmistakeably settled that question. "I am an Irishman," said he, "and I was born near the town of Kilkenny, where there is fire without smoke, air without fog, water without mud, earth without bog, and the streets are paved with marble." In his description of the scenery on the southern shore of Galway Bay, he told me, also, of a valley in which there was "not a tree large enough to hang a man,

nor water enough to drown a man, nor earth enough to bury a man." "I am here," said he, "for a few days shooting in the Wicklow hills, which is about the best grouse-shooting ground in Ireland now. I'll be back in this house in less than a week; and I shall be glad to meet with you on my return!" I had a pleasant hour or two with that fine young Irishman; and I was sorry to part with him so soon. . . . As I have said before, it was the time of the meeting of the British Association,—“The Philosophers' Week,” as some writer has called it,—and the ancient city swarmed with sage-looking grey-beards and their fluttering satellites,—more or less scientific; and sometimes, not at all so. . . . After breakfast I went down to the reception-room of the Association, which was in the council-room of Trinity College. Here I met with some old friends; and, as I sat there, I saw with interest first one and then another of the great chieftains of scientific thought trickle in at the doorway. I was particularly struck by the appearance of Professor Huxley, whose tall figure and calm face seemed to have shrunk considerably since I last saw him, in Belfast, where his grand address in the Ulster Hall, in connection with that of Professor Tyndall, roused the whole theological community of the province of Ulster into a furious storm of opposition, which has hardly subsided even yet. . . . I lounged about the fine quadrangle of Trinity College a while,—dreaming of Goldsmith, Burke, Grattan, Shiel, Blake, Boyle, Berkeley, and a host of other eminent names associated with the place.

CHAPTER III.

Go search with kindly care the gifts
Our land can boast :—
Soft Erna's isles, Neagh's wooded slopes,
Clare's iron coast ;
Kildare, whose legends wild the heart do stir
With fay and ghost ;
Grey Mourne, green Antrim, purple Glenmalur,
Lena's fairy host ;
Then run through foreign lands to learn to love old Ireland
most.

CHAS. GAVAN DUFFY.

N the fifth day of the meeting in Dublin, the chief business of the British Association was nearly over. The calm assaults of another year's scientific research upon our old ways of thinking had been made, and had once more aroused a great welter of fierce discussion. The foremost men of the world of thought had once more sent the illuminated ball spooming a little farther into the dark ; and there was another shaking amongst the dry bones. "The Philosophers' Week" was drawing to a close. In the different sections the attendance gradually dwindled, and the great Congress of the year,—so potent in its influence upon the future,—began to show signs of disintegration. The remainder of the time of the meeting was mainly given to choice soirées, concerts, pic-nics, and select junketting parties, in delightful places of the land, under lordly auspices. And yet, even with these,—such was the careful selection of the spot, either on account of its natural

features or its historic associations,—there was a great deal of scientific interest interwoven, which gave a leaven of learning to the blithest recreations of the time. It was a pleasant and graceful finish to the labours of the meeting; and, as usual, Irish hospitality was gushingly bountiful and warm. Already, too, I found that different companies of friends were beginning to knit together, here and there, each eager to explore in an independent way, some great point of interest in the Emerald Isle. The great school was “loosing,” and the scholars were preparing for a rush into the open air. Some were off to the wild coast of Antrim, and the wonders of the Giant’s Causeway; some to the Lakes of Killarney, and the ruin-crowned Rock of Cashel; some to the Vale of Avoca; some to Glendalough, and the picturesque mountains of Wicklow; and some were preparing to rush down to the city of Cork, where,—

The bells of Shandon
Sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the river Lee.

Others,—with an eye to the fishing,—were girding up their loins for a run through the wilds of Connemara, and the wonderful scenery of the iron-bound western coast; with a day or two in the quaint, half-Spanish “City of the Tribes,” and its gipsy-like suburb of fishermen,—the Claddagh. Guide-books and tourist tickets were in great demand. Abstract thought was beginning to subside; and all the scientific world seemed to be, now, solely on pleasure bent; and Moore’s sweetly plaintive melodies began to rise in the air on all sides. In one corner, a young student,—who was preparing for a trip to Glendalough, and the Vale of

Avoca,—croons to himself, as he directs a label for his trunk,—

By that lake whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er;
Where the cliff hangs high and steep,
Young Saint Kevin stole to sleep;

whilst his companion sings, as he paces the lobby outside,—

Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

In the ladies' room, too, I hear the piano touched by delicate fingers, whilst some beautiful voice delights the listening ear with Moore's song,—

Sweet Innisfallen, fare thee well,
May calm and sunshine long be thine;
How fair thou art, let others tell,
While but to feel how fair be mine.

I hear it all, to the end of the last sweet cadence; and I know full well that somebody in that room is going down to see the Lakes of Killarney, soon after the Lord Mayor's soirée is over. . . . As for myself, I had agreed with three old friends to run up to Westport, in the county of Mayo, returning thence through the wilds of Connemara, and the city of Galway; and staying on our way, for two or three days, with a scientific friend of ours, at the pretty spa of Lisdoonvarna, in the county of Clare; and within five miles of the wildest coast scenery in all the island. Before leaving Dublin, however, I will glance at one or two interesting incidents partly connected with the closing programme of the Association.

On the morning after Mr. Romanes' great lecture in the Exhibition Palace, I set out with a few geological friends for a trip to Bray Head, about twelve miles from Dublin, along the southern shore of the bay. On the way, one of our company told us that about thirty years ago, when Bray was a much smaller village than now, he set out from Dublin, alone, for a geological trip to Bray Head. Finding on his arrival at the village that he had lost his geological hammer, he inquired at the only hotel in the place if they knew of anybody in Bray who could lend him a "geological hammer." "Devil a one there is in the village, sur," replied the landlord; "sure, *ours are all made of iron!*" We found Bray a very pleasant seaside village; with excellent hotels along the shelving beach. As we came through the village we spied a drunken Paddy coming up in front, reeling to and fro in tipsy jollity. "Look at that fellow," said one; "sure he's measuring the road." "Well, indeed then," replied our friend, "he ought to know the width of it, anyhow, for he's been in both gutters within the last two minutes." Apart from the agreeable companionship on the way, my share in the interest of this trip certainly did not lie in the direction of geology,—and I felt sorry that it was so,—but I was amply repaid by the fine view it afforded me of the beautiful bay of Dublin, embracing to the north, Killiney Bay, Howth, and the Mourne mountains; to the west, the Sugar Loaves, and the Shanklin mountain; and to the south, Wicklow Head. At Bray, we were within four or five miles of some of the most beautiful glen and mountain scenery in all Ireland. But our way was up Bray Head, which rises from the southern end of the village.

. . . When we were about half way up the winding mountain road, we met with an old piper, seated under the shelter of a low wall, close by the rough roadside. The old man was all alone ; and the soft wail of his pipes mingled with the melancholy sough of the wind as we came up. The piper was evidently a great age, and almost blind ; and his pipes seemed almost as old as himself ; for their tone was low and wheezy, and softly-plaintive as the voice of a sick child ; and the fingering-places were worn deep into the wood by long usage. My friends went on up the mountain side, talking merrily, and splintering the rocks, now and then, with their geological hammers ; and I sat down by the side of the old piper, on a little grassy border, under the shelter of the low wall, through the crevices of which, by fits, the wind whistled shrill. When the old man saw me seated on the ground beside him, he tried to put a little mettle into his poor old pipes ; but, in spite of all that he could do,—such was the tremulous feebleness of their sweet wail,—that it needed careful attention sometimes to distinguish between one tune and another. But the old piper and I had all the world to ourselves for a while, upon that wild mountain side overlooking Dublin bay ; and we both enjoyed it. After listening for some time, I delighted him by asking for some of the fine old Irish airs,—“The Coolun,” “The Pretty Girl milking her Cow,” “The Twisting of the Rope,” and “The Wearing of the Green.” “Musha, good luck to your honour !” said he, again and again, as he played the darling old melodies, one after another, in his own wild, sweet, shaky way,—which was so touching in its childlike helplessness,—“Arrah, more power

to your honour, but that's the rale music!" But, when I asked him to play "O'Donnell aboo!" the old man's decrepid frame seemed to stretch with a touch of fiery pride, and, turning his faded eyes up to the heavens, he said, as he struck up the ancient battle-song of the wild clans of Donegal, "Indeed, then, your honour, that's the brave old tune!" We were together for nearly an hour after this, during which time he played, with evident delight to himself as well as me, "Paddies Evermore!" "The Fox-hunter's Jig," and one or two fine wild "Planxtys;" till, at last, overpowered by the mountain air, and the low drowsy buzz of the piper, I fell sound asleep by his side. And when I woke-up again the old man was still piping dreamily to the listening mountain side. "Faith, ye had a brave nap, your honour!" said he, as I rose from the ground. . . . And, as I climbed the heathery steep to seek my scientific friends, I felt that my trip to Bray Head had not been, what we call in Lancashire, "a lost gate."

The next day was Sunday. The Bishop of Derry was announced to preach in Christ Church Cathedral; and a great congregation was expected, swelled by the presence of the vice-regal court, and the principal members of the Association,—for it had been "noised abroad" that his lordship intended to attack the general attitude of the scientific world in relation to religion. . . . We entered the church gates three-quarters of an hour before the time; and, even then, we found a crowd waiting for the opening of the door. About half-an-hour before service-time, the door opened, and the crowd surged in. There was a great rush along the aisles up to the seats near the rood screen, and,

somehow, my friend and I got planted on the foremost line of seats, close to the choir, and within four or five yards of the pulpit. Close by sat the members of the Lord Lieutenant's family ; and, on a special seat near them, sat a tall, good-looking old man, with clear, ruddy complexion, light hair, and benevolent countenance. This was Mr. Henry Roe, the distiller, who has spent £200,000 upon the restoration of the cathedral. But, foremost of all the congregation, upon a separate seat, close by the rood screen, and right in front of the pulpit, sat a tall thin figure, with a long face, and aquiline nose, and a calmly stern expression of countenance. This was William Spottiswood, the President of the British Association. A quarter of an hour before the service began, the church was crammed till there was no standing room unoccupied. It was an imposing scene. This is a famous old church. According to the "Black Book of Christ Church," its vaults were formed by the Danes before the visit of St. Patrick to Ireland, who afterwards celebrated mass in one of them. The service was very impressive ; and the anthem, sung by one of the finest choirs in the kingdom, — "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge," — seemed singularly appropriate to the occasion. The Bishop preached a powerful and fervid sermon, in which there was, nevertheless, something of an apologetic tone, as he wrestled with masterly ability against the tendencies of the Darwinian theory of evolution ; and it was a striking thing to see, through the whole of that discourse, the Bishop's commanding figure and earnest countenance

face to face with the calm, stern look of the President of the Association, about four yards off.

The next day was crowded with interesting incidents. In the forenoon, the degree of LL.D., *honoris causa*, was conferred, at a meeting of the Senate of the University, on twelve of the most eminent members of the British Association. The ceremony took place in the Common Hall, which was crowded with a brilliant assembly of ladies and gentlemen, together with the Right Hon. Judge Longfield, the Vice-Chancellor, the Provost, and all the great officers of the University. After the usual preliminary ceremonies, the twelve gentlemen were summoned into the hall. The company made a lane for them to pass through ; and it was a fine sight to see those twelve scientific veterans, as they came slowly up the room, clad in graceful academic robes, with faces strongly marked with the lines of thought, yet singularly calm and dignified. When they had taken their seats in the places assigned to them, on each side, at right angles to the dais, the Proctor read out each name,—commencing with the President of the Association,—and each recipient of the honour walked to the table at which the Vice-Chancellor sat, and facing Dr. Webb, Q.C., Professor of Law, that gentleman delivered a brief oration relative to each in introducing each of the distinguished gentlemen. The Vice-Chancellor then conferred the degree, and the new graduate bowed, the Vice-Chancellor returning the salutation. The registry of graduates having been signed by the new *alumnus*, he returned to the seat he previously occupied. Such was the form of ceremonial in the several cases, each instance of its performance being accompanied

by loud applause,—particularly in the case of Professor Huxley, in which there was almost an ovation. In a few minutes after the hall was empty again ; and the new *alumni* were wandering about the quadrangle of the College, among the undistinguished crowd. . . . In the evening the now famous club, called “The Red Lions,” held their annual meeting at the Shelborne Hotel ; and, a little before five o’clock, I donned my “war paint” for the occasion.

The “Red Lion” Club is a phase of relaxation which had its rise in the Association itself, and is limited to its members.

Nearly a hundred of these animals assembled at the den in the Shelborne hotel for a royal feast ; and never at a convocation of Lapland witches, or at a midnight meeting of cats, was there a more bewildering scene of tail-wagging and uproar.

The following is the *ménu* :—

Fete d’ane aux champignon ; jambe de cheval au naturel ; cotelettes de giraffe à la Soubise ; chat saute à la Maintenon ; moutons à la Phœnix Park ; cerfs au sang ; beverages : vino Irlandese ; vino Scozzese ; vin de poteen, which, being translated, means, donkey fed on mushrooms ; a horse’s thigh from under the whip ; giraffe cutlets adapted from the French ; the domestic cat cooked upon the tiles ; surreptitious sheep ; sanguineous stags ; wines of Irish, Scotch, and illicit manufacture ; Cyprus wines from the wood à la Gladstone. Each lion to have his *deserts*.

The following was the journal for the evening :—

Professor Spottiswoode : On the measurement of the 1,000,000th part of an inch—with specimens.

Mr. Romanes : On Performing Dogs.

Canon MacIlwaine : On Mr. Romanes.

Sir John Lubbock : On his "Ants," and their Little Games.

Mr. Wigham : On "The Lights and Shadows of Fogland," with special reference to a Flirtation with an Irish Siren.

Mr. T. A. Dillon : On Windbags, and their effect on Sunken Ships.

Professor Hull : On the Geological strata of Dublin streets—after rain.

Captain Burnaby : On the virtues of Cockle's Pills,

Mr. Stanley : On the beauties of Dublin Bay—as seen from a distance——Paris.

Professor Flower : On Longheadedness,

Sir Wyville Thomson : On "The Bottom of the Deep Blue Sea, Oh, my!"

Captain Feilden : On "Greenland's Icy Mountains."

Mr. Burrell : On tea-totalism.

The fun grew "fast and furious," till it drew near eight o'clock, when the "Red Lions" broke loose from their den, in order to be present at the conversazione at the Mansion House ; and not the least amusing thing in the whole of the proceedings, was the frightened look of the manager of the hotel, as he rushed to and fro, during the feast. He was utterly bewildered ; for he knew nothing whatever of the nature of the club ; and he seemed to think that he had been somehow inveigled into entertaining a company of lunatics.

The conversazione was given by the President and Council of the Royal Irish Academy, at their house in Dawson-street, which is next to the Mansion House. It was a brilliant affair ; but it was a great crush. Nearly two thousand visitors filled the rooms, which were luxuriantly decorated. In order to give increased accommodation, the Lord Mayor had placed the great rooms of the Mansion House at the disposal of the Academy, and the two build-

ings were joined together by a long covered bridge of communication, carpeted with crimson cloth and brilliantly lighted. The museum of the Academy is full of archaeological interest; and when, amongst the surging crowd, I caught a sight of St. Patrick's Bell, and the Cross of Cong, and the Book of Kells, I longed for a quiet day amongst this rare collection of ancient Irish relics. The vice-regal party arrived about nine o'clock; and the first intimation we had of the fact was when three remarkably tall officers of police came marching slowly abreast through the glittering crowd, whispering as they went, "Make way for the Lord-Lieutenant, please!" After these came a row of military officers, who were followed by a well-built, middle-aged gentleman, about five feet eight in height, and with a smiling face. He wore the blue riband and star of the Garter upon his breast; and he chatted freely with his officers as he went slowly along. After them came the Duchess of Marlborough, and the members of the vice-regal court, with another body of officers; and then the crowd closed behind the glittering cortege; and all went on as before.

. . . Long before the dancing began in the great Round Room,—which was built for the reception of George the Fourth,—I stole away from the din and heat of the crowd, and crept off to bed, utterly tired with the doings of the day.

And now, I will bid adieu to Dublin and the British Association; and pack up my things for a run through the wilds of Connemara.

CHAPTER IV.

A plenteous place is Ireland for hospitable cheer ;
 Uileacan dubh, O !
Where the wholesome fruit is bursting from the yellow barley ear ;
 Uileacan dubh, O !
There is honey in the trees where her misty vales expand,
And her forest paths, in summer, are by falling waters fanned ;
There is dew in the sunny noontide, and springs in the yellow sand,
 On the fair hills of holy Ireland.

Large and profitable are the stacks upon the ground ;
 Uileacan dubh, O !
And the butter and the cream do wondrously abound ;
 Uileacan dubh, O !
The cresses on the water and the sorrels are at hand,
And the cuckoo's calling daily his note of music bland,
And the bold thrush sings so bravely his song in forests grand,
 On the fair hills of holy Ireland.

TRANSLATED FROM THE IRISH.

“OW, mind, we all meet at eight in the morning,
prompt, at Broadstone Station !”

This was late at night, in front of the hotel on St. Stephen's Green, as I parted with the three friends who were to be my companions through the wilds of Connemara.

It had been raining in the night ; but the morning was bright and clear, and St. Stephen's Green looked fresh and sweet as I left the hotel on a jaunting-car, and rode across the city, more than two miles, in and out, to the Broadstone Station, on the north-western boundary. Dublin was taking

down its shutters, and washing its doorsteps, here and there, as I rattled along. The road was very quiet ; and I got a fine view of Sackville-street and of the north-western part of the city, in the clear, cool, morning air. The tram-cars were not yet astir, and the wheels of my chariot sounded cheerily distinct upon the drowsy pavement between the half-awakened houses. As we drew near the skirt of the city we came upon half-paven and unpaven roads, which the night's rain had left in a sloppy state. Here the driver, with a mischievous leer in his eye, looked down from his seat, and said, "The roads is heavy this morning, your honour !" "They are," said I. "Faith, this is the hardest drive in Dublin !" said he, as he pulled up at the entrance to the station. "Indeed !" said I. "What's the fare ?" . . . It was a beautiful morning ; and Paddy and I parted good friends. But, whilst he and I were talking together another car came rattling up, bringing a keen-looking, sharp-nosed spinster, of something more than middle age. Leaping down from her seat, she handed Paddy the fare. "What's this ?" cried he, in a kind of yell. "That is one shilling for the fare ; and twopence per parcel for the luggage !" replied she, with malignant precision. And then she switched away out of sight at once ; leaving poor Paddy turning the money over in his hand, and glaring after her with flashing eyes. "That is one shilling for the fare ; and *two pence per parcel* for the luggage !" cried he, mimicking the razory squeak of her voice with vindictive delight. "Bad luck to your parchment face,—ye——old skin flint ! Begorra ; I wish ye were a horse, an' I had the drivin' of ye !" But she had gone ; and Paddy knew right well that it was no use

following her. She was the wrong sort ; so he pocketed the money, and drove away, growling to himself, "I'd rather welt that old divul than wed her, any way !"

We were all in good time ; and we were all in good spirits. It was a long and slow motioned ride ; but it was a beautiful day, and the ground was new to every man of us ; and we got snugly planted in a comfortable compartment by our four selves. . . . Our way lay right across the middle to the island, from Dublin on the east, to Westport on the rocky shore of the county of Mayo in the wild west. The distance was about one hundred and eighty miles. The country was almost entirely one great plain, slightly undulant in some parts ; and I found, on consulting the guide-book, that we passed through many places of note on the way. At the very start, the line led between the pretty village of Glasnevin on the right, where Addison, Swift, Tickell, and Sheridan resided ; and where Curran and O'Connell lie buried ; and, on the left, Phœnix Park, consisting of nearly 2,000 statute acres of beautiful park land, finely timbered. At Clonsilla station, the observatory of the Dublin University is seen on the left, crowning a wooded height ; and, on the opposite side, the ruins of Castleknock, built by Hugh Tyrell, in the reign of Henry II., and taken by Edward Bruce in 1316, and by Colonel Monk in 1642. We now run through some delightful cultivated scenery, till we come to Leixlip, with the ivy-mantled towers of its castle, built by Adam Fitz-Herford, one of the Anglo-Norman conquerors, rising majestically above the surrounding trees. The next station on the line is Maynooth. We looked out for the famous Roman Catholic College, and for the remains of the

castle built by the sixth Earl of Kildare ; but we saw nothing of the village ; nothing of the ruined castle of the Fitzgeralds ; and nothing but part of the outer walls of St. Patrick's College, which stands close by the line ; but there was an air of unusual cleanliness and importance about the station ; and there were dark-robed priests pacing the platform, with abstracted air, all alone. The country is well-wooded, and studded with mansions, for a few miles after we leave Maynooth, till we come to Fernslock. Soon after we have passed this place, the line runs through a vast bog, once a forest, inhabited by the formidable Irish elk, whose bones are still often found amongst the peat. Turf-cutters are at work, here and there. Large trees are met with at various depths, and some of them are laid along the line as we go by. It is a wild and desolate scene : and for the first time I get an idea of what an Irish bog really is, and the wild-eyed men, in their rough attire, and the old women and girls, with their madder-dyed red skirts fluttering in the wind whilst at work among the dark turf-stacks, give a wonderfully picturesque appearance to the great peaty wilderness. Leaving the bog, we pass the ruined church of Cloncurry ; and then, a little further on, we see in the distance the ruined walls of Castle Carberry, and the Hill of Carberry, famous for many a fierce encounter between the Anglo-Normans and the Irish. It is the same story all the way, ruined castles here and ruined churches there, and ruined walls and roofless cottages in every town and village ; and great tracts of good land lying neglected everywhere. It is the same on all sides, go where you will. . . . The next town of importance that we came to was Mullingar. Here we got a

glimpse of Lough Ennell, five miles long, and one and a quarter in breadth. Mullingar is a famous cattle town. The proverb, "She's beef to the heels, like a Mullingar heifer," is not unknown even in England. Here again, Mullingar,—like the rest of the Irish towns,—has its mouldering piles of ecclesiastical ruins; for there are some remains of an Augustine priory, founded in 1227; and of a Dominican friary, erected in 1237. About twenty miles more, through three or four little ragged towns, brings us to Athlone, where the Widow Malone "melted the hearts of the swains in thim parts," as the song says. Athlone is famous for its strong old castle, and for the great share it has had in the fierce history of the island. Whilst we stop a few minutes at the station, three or four fishermen are very busy hawking fine live eels amongst the passengers. At Athlone, too, we get our first view of the Shannon,—that grand river of Western Ireland, far surpassing the Thames, or the Mersey, or the Severn, in natural greatness, and having a course of two hundred and forty miles, navigable by barges all the way. Most Englishmen know so little of Ireland that they are quite surprised when they hear this,—but it is true. . . . At Athlone, our way diverges, and turns aside, and runs up to the north-west, through Roscommon, and many lesser places, some close by the line, some within a mile or two, and others faintly seen in the distance, but all more or less known in the annals of the land, and almost all connected with some ruined old castle, or church, or both; for every foot of this Irish land seems to have been sacked and raided, and steeped in the red rain of war, from its earliest history till now,—first in wild conflicts between its native

princes, and then in conflicts with the invading stranger, and now,—go where you will in this naturally-rich and beautiful country,—there is an air of neglect, and poverty, and dilapidation that tinges the whole scene with melancholy.

We got into Westport, in the county of Mayo, as “the rosy rays of evening fell ;” and there we found a quaint old town, with a clear river flowing through its midst ; a comfortable hotel ; and very agreeable company.

CHAPTER V.

When the law can stop the blades of grass
From growing as they grow,
And when the leaves in summer time
Their verdure dare not show,
Then I will change the colour that
I wear in my caubeen ;
But till that day, plaze God, I'll stick
To wearing of the green.

IRISH SONG.

IT was about five in the evening when we reached Westport, on the wild coast of Mayo, after our seven hours' ride across the centre of Ireland. The station is outside the town ; and I did not think much of the place as we rode in through the straggling huts of the outskirts until we pulled up at the hotel, in front of a clear mountain stream, about twenty yards wide, which runs through the middle of the town, with rows of trees growing along its bank. The trees and the river give a shady

sweetness to this part of Westport, which is greatly enhanced by the rich boskage of Lord Sligo's park, hard by. . . . The inn was crowded, but we found it comfortable ; and after we had got shaken into our places, I sat down to smoke, upon a low wall which divides the road in front of the hotel from the river, and I looked about me. . . . The evening was clear and cool, and the declining sun flooded the town and the clear stream in its midst with rosy light. The seats in the porch of the inn are filled with brisk Irish swells, who are loafing about after the fishing in Clew Bay. There they sit, smoking and laughing ; whilst at an open window, on the floor above, two smooth-shaven, rosy priests are seated, looking dreamily down upon the glowing stream as it shimmers westward in the light of the setting sun. About fifty yards up the stream there is an old stone bridge, which leads from the lower to the upper part of the town. A flight of worn steps leads down from the end of the bridge into the water, where a stout, sweet-looking young Irishwoman stands knee-deep, with her red petticoat tucked up, rinsing clothes in the running stream, and beetling them upon a smooth stone near the steps, where her two little children sit watching her. One of the window-sills in front of the hotel is full of home-knit Connemara stockings and socks, which a shrewd-looking middle-aged Paddy, with a rattling tongue, and a cunning leer in his eye, is pushing persistently upon every stranger that comes in sight. He does not always succeed, however, for he asks rather more than double what they are worth, to begin with,—and, here and there,—he meets with a Yorkshireman. Upon the flags, in front of the house, a quiet looking young Irishman, with

a Hebrew cast of countenance, is pacing to and fro, with a tray-full of really pretty ornaments, — harps, crosses, brooches, shamrocks, ruined castles, ivy-clad round towers, and the like,—all tastefully wrought in the fine green Connemara marble, which is not found anywhere else. The young man is civil, and not too obtrusive ; but he glides about continually in search of customers ; and he sells a few of his ornaments, though he will not take a penny less than the price asked. These two peripatetic traders seem to have all the front of the hotel to themselves, as a kind of open air market ; and, perhaps, they pay for the use of it. . . . I took a stroll through the upper part of the town, which is mainly scattered about the slope of a southern hill-side ; and then, creeping over a green knoll to westward, it straggles down the side of the old quay, where a long row of tall, empty, windowless warehouses, fast hastening to ruin, tell the former importance of the place, when it was, as its name indicates, the chief port of the west of Ireland. I found the town rustic-looking, with fair streets and many good houses and shops, mingled, however, with a good deal of dilapidation and squalor. Altogether, it has the appearance of a place that has been better off than it is now. The prevailing names upon the shop signs seem to be O'Malleys, Regans, Joyces, and Toolles. Some of these names have an historic ring. The O'Malleys remind one of the famous Irish chieftainess, Grace O'Malley, who bearded Queen Elizabeth with such barbaric pride at Hampton Court ; and who stole the young heir of the Lords of Howth, on her way home, in revenge for the inhospitality of his father, and brought him away to her sea-beaten castle on Clare Island,

at the mouth of Clew Bay, yonder, in front of the town. Grace O'Malley is the Boadicea of Irish story, and her name is cherished in song and legend. There is an old Irish melody which bears her name,—“Grana Wail.” The name of Joyce reminds us that at Westport we are near the country of “The big Joyces.” . . . At sunset I chartered a car at the hotel and rode through the Marquis of Sligo's park, which is really a grand woodland scene, full of noble trees. About the middle of the park the driver drew my attention to a great stone trough, about ten feet long and four feet deep, lying under a tree close by the way. “The Marquis had that cut,” said he, pointing with his whip, “to hold his coffin when he dies.” Emerging from the park, I came out upon the shore, near the old ruined bonded warehouses of the town. Here I got a glimpse of Clew Bay and its wild islands, and I met with a piper and a fiddler, seated together on an old bridge, playing to the dancing of a knot of bare-footed lads and lasses in the rosy twilight. I got them to play “O'Donnell aboo!” and “Grana Wail”; and returned to the hotel by another route in the dusk of the evening.

We left Westport at nine next morning, by the mail car for Cliefden, a distance of forty eight English miles. And here, at the outset, I may say with my friend and companion, Professor Taylor, that it is “a bewilderingly lovely drive.” The first two miles of our way led up a continual ascent, which brought us, at last, to a long stretch of boggy moorland, lit up, here and there, with pools and little lakes,—a very “paradise of water plants.” Around this wild tableland the mountains gathered in a grand sweep, amongst

which the conical peak of Croagh Patrick was most conspicuous, and seemed to follow us for the next twenty miles. As we crossed this heathery waste my scientific friends were in ecstasies at the rich variety of water plants in the pools and lakes by the roadside, and the way was enlivened by many an enthusiastic descant upon the flora of the scene, and upon the grandeur of the misty mountains around us, "upon whose ancient peaks the storms of millions of years have spent their fury." The scene was beautifully wild, hemmed in by those grand old misty hills. And yet, even upon this desolate tract, the smell of turf fires came upon the wind, now and then, and little wreaths of blue smoke arose, here and there, from huts which were scarcely discernible, so near were they to the ground, and so like the rest of the scene in colour,—and so kindly did they seem to blend with the wild landscape around. And yet, bleak as the scene was, our way was far from solitary, for it was market-day in Westport, and for many miles we were continually meeting with picturesque groups of mountaineers on their way thither,—every group a gem that would have delighted an artist's eye,—all rustically clad,—the women in blue cloaks and home-dyed red petticoats,—sometimes bare-legged and on foot,—sometimes riding in pairs, man and wife, pillion-fashion. These groups of market folk were a succession of charming pictures, and again and again I wished that my friend Watson had been there to see them. . . . At length our way began to dip, and we gradually descended in the beautiful valley of the Erive, attended by the mountain stream from which it now takes its name. And now, for the next few miles, roaring

cascades, foaming rapids, bold hills half shrouded in mist, dark ravines, and precipitous rocks, succeed each other in varied combinations ; and as we roll on through this magnificent scenery, my friends stop the car, now and then, to gather specimens of the royal flowering fern and of the *Dabeocia polifolia*, or St. Dabeoc's heath, not to be found anywhere but in this mountain region. At length the wild hills seem to divide, and we descend to the pretty village of Leenane, at the head of Killery Bay. The Killery is an arm of the sea which runs inland for ten miles, between lofty hills, expanding at its head, near Leenane, into a beautiful sheet of water, nearly a mile in width. Around this seemingly land-locked water at the head of the bay, the wild mountains cluster grandly, with Mweelrea (2,688 feet high) overtopping them all. It is a singularly beautiful scene; and the general cry amongst us was that it was worth while coming all the way to look upon it alone. There is an excellent inn at Leenane, close by the water side. There we changed horses ; and refreshed, before beginning the latter half of our day's journey.

The distance from Leenane to Cliefden is about twenty-four miles. Soon after leaving Leenane we enter the famous Pass of Kylemore, which is about three miles long, containing the lough of the same name, said to be the most beautiful of any in the Western Highlands. Its waters occupy nearly the whole of the basin between the lofty mountains which guard the pass. Kylemore Pass,—which, a few years ago, was a wild, and desolate, and unproductive scene,—is now a remarkable evidence of what this neglected country might become under favourable treatment. In the very heart of

the pass, and at the head of the lough, Mr. Mitchell Henry, "the Protestant member of Parliament for the most Catholic county in Ireland," has built a magnificent mansion, and he is gradually training the wild country around, for miles, into a scene of fertile beauty. He has, indeed, made "the desert blossom like the rose." The same may be said of the pretty village of Letterfrack,—a settlement of the Society of Friends. "A few years ago," says the author of *Connemara, Past and Present*, "Letterfrack was a barren rock ; it is now a crown of beauty." Whilst lingering a few minutes at Letterfrack, I noticed how luxuriantly the fuschia grows there in the open air. I saw long hedges of it in full flower, by the roadside. We no sooner left Letterfrack, however, than we plunged once more into the neglected wild ; and the rest of our way was comparatively uninteresting. Twilight was stealing in as we rode into Cliefden, which was the end of our day's journey. Cliefden is quite a new town, with nothing remarkable about it, except its beautiful situation, on a green ridge, at the head of Ardbear Bay. Even so late as 1815 there was only one house on the spot where the town now stands. In the centre of the market-place, I noticed a great pair of scales hung upon an iron triangle, firmly fixed in the ground. I found that these belonged to the lord of the manor, who received a great part of his dues in kind. We found the inn roughly-comfortable ; and we spent an hour or two, at night, with a quaint and intelligent old lapidary, called M'Donnell, who drove a gainful trade by the sale of Irish ornaments wrought in the green Connemara marble.

Our next day's journey, from Cliefden to Galway, "The

City of the Tribes," was a distance of forty-nine English miles ; and our way led through scenery which was even wilder in character than any we had yet seen. More than twenty miles of the route was overfrowned, on one side, by the gloomy brotherhood of mountains known as "The Twelve Pins," or "Bens." On the other side, lake followed lake, in quick succession, for nearly thirty miles. The first place of note we came to was Ballynahinch, or the Town of the Island. We rode close by Ballynahinch Lough the whole of its length. At the head of the lough we saw, on the opposite side of the water, the ancient seat of the Martins, who once owned 200,000 acres of land in this part of the country. On a little island, near the same end of the lough, and in full view from our road, stood the lofty ruin of Ballynahinch Castle, built as a place of strength by the early Martins, whose ancestor was a soldier in Cromwell's army. Before we came to a place called "Recess," where there is an excellent inn, close by the side of Lough Inagh, it began to rain. For the next twenty miles it rained incessantly ; and gloomy, driving clouds gave a savage aspect to the wild landscape, with its half-shrouded mountains. Nothing on earth could be more desolate and dismal than the appearance of the bleak scenery which we passed through during that wet ride. And yet, in spite of the rain, every little ruinous hut and wild village by the way sent forth a swarm of children,—most of them with beautiful faces and figures,—trying to sell home-knit stockings to the passengers on the car. They ran after the car for miles in the heavy rain, holding up their stockings now and then in a mute way, for many of them could not speak a word of English. At

the village of Oughterard we got off the car, like so many drenched water-dogs, to taste of what the driver called "Parliamint whisky," in contradistinction to the illicit "potheen" distilled in the mountains. The rain ceased a few miles before we reached Galway ; and it was a beautiful evening as we rode into the "City of the Tribes," where we housed for the night at the Railway Hotel.

The next day was devoted to the quaint and peculiar features of the city of Galway. The lower part of the town, near to the quay, is full of great empty warehouses and deserted courts, and ruined mansions, amongst which there are many interesting relics of old Spanish architecture. From the parapet of Galway Bridge we could see the salmon lying in scores at the bottom of the stream, waiting for the freshets. In order that we might see much in little time, we chartered a car, and drove in and out among the streets to Lynch's Castle, and to the ancient gateways, and through the "Claddagh," a singular suburb, situated on the harbour, in which the descendants of the ancient Spanish settlers still dwell apart from the rest of the inhabitants of Galway, whom they call "transplanters," and look upon as an inferior race. They have laws of their own ; and are governed by a sort of mayor, called "The King of the Claddaghs," elected every seven years. As we rode through the "Claddagh," a woman at one of the cottage doors pointed to the polished boots of my friend upon the car, and cried out, "Arrah, see the leather pots!" From the "Claddagh" we rode out to Queen's College; which is a handsome Gothic structure, on the northern skirt of the town. It was market day ; and whilst waiting on the car at the College gates little knots of

country women passed by, clad in blue cloaks, and heather-dyed petticoats. They were on their way to the market with their produce. Many of them had walked twenty miles since break of day, with, in some cases, as much as twenty stone weight upon their backs; and they would return the same distance, when the market was over, laden with home-stuff. On our way back to the city, my friend remarked to the driver that his horse looked tired. "Tired, is it?" cried he, giving the beast a switch. "Arrah, it's only schamin' he is! Begorra, I'd ventur' to lave forty mile behind me wid the four o' yees, an' not turn a hair on his hide, the divil!" We rode through the potato market, which was crowded with farmers and peasantry from the out-lying districts, and a more picturesque scene of the kind I never beheld. It might have been a market place in some old town in Spain. I was much puzzled with certain bundles of long sticks which were lying about on the ground for sale; but I found, on inquiry, that they were bundles of ash plants, called "scollops," used to bind thatch with.

The next day we left Galway, and crossed the bay to Ballyvaughan, in the county of Clare. The bay of Galway is the finest bay in all Ireland; and it certainly is a noble sight. Looking back upon the city, from the deck of the steamer, the place has a melancholy appearance. It was a kind of Liverpool when Liverpool was only a fishing village; but now it is full of ruined walls, and silent courts, and mouldering relics of ancient grandeur. Its great windowless warehouses look out upon the shipless sea with a spectral gaze. There is no smoke in the air; and there

is no noise upon its grass-grown wharves. The few vessels in the harbour look lost and companionless, as if they had dropt in by chance on their way to some other port. The wind sighs audibly through the lower streets of the old town, and the waters of the bay look hungry for traffic.

. . . On our way from Ballyvaughan to Lisdoonvarna, in the county of Clare, we crossed a wild table land, where a little Catholic chapel stands close by the road. As we drew near the little chapel, a gentleman upon the car pointed to the ground in front of the chapel, and said, "A fearful tragedy took place on that spot a few years ago. Five policemen arrested a man there, who had come down from the mountain to mass. The people who were waiting for mass rescued the man from them. A fight ensued. The policemen shot their prisoner to prevent his escape. The mob instantly attacked the policemen with sticks and stones, and killed the whole five. The mob then took to flight, leaving the five policemen dead upon the road ; and when the priest came at noon to say mass he found the chapel empty, and the five dead bodies lying in the road, with not a living soul in sight upon all the wild landscape."

We stayed at the pretty spa of Lisdoonvarna, breathing its "creamy" air, and enjoying the bountiful hospitality of a scientific friend of ours (Dr. Westropp), under whose kindly guidance we saw much of the beauty of that charming nook of the "Green Isle ;" amongst which the magnificent cliff scenery of that iron-bound coast was striking. Altogether, our short sojourn at Lisdoonvarna will be long remembered with delight.

From Lisdoonvarna we returned by the shortest sea route to England ; for our pleasant Irish holiday was over.

MISCELLANY.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A SERE LEAF	281
AN OLD NEST	288
ROSTHERNE MERE	310
ST. CATHERINE'S CHAPEL; OR, THE PRETTY ISLAND BAY	324
THE COMPLAINT OF A SAD COMPLAINT	340
OLIVER FERNLEAF'S WATCH	348
THE MONTH OF MAY	359
EVENING BY THE SEA	369
ON THE DART	385





A Sere Tent.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green, all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard—
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go.

SHAKESPEARE.

IT has struck twelve with me, some time ago. I can hear the soft footfall of approaching twilight; and I am inclined to think that it may prove a pleasant part of the day after all. Life's tide has turned; and now it retires again to the ocean from whence it came. Time is delving parallels in the brow that once was "smooth as monumental alabaster;" and each particular wrinkle seems eloquent of the story of its origin. The march of half a century of years has trodden down the crop that grew upon this wintry upland; and

That time of day thou now behold'st in me,
When few and withered leaves do hang against the cold.

The hair about my temples stirs to the slightest breath of wind, now, like the flossy down of the "clock-posy;" and silver threads are beginning to shine among the relics of youth's auburn curl. I can hear invisible minstrels fingering those gleaming strings to plaintive ditties of decay; and, thank heaven, I can listen to the pensive melody without sadness. . . . My disposition is naturally sunny,—sometimes soaring up to jocund mirth,—sometimes sobered with the "pale cast of thought;" and, now and then, even clouded with a fit of brooding melancholy. Being blest, too, with an unusually strong constitution, I am just of that age when a man is unwilling to think that he is growing old; and is, therefore, in danger of treating himself as if he was as young as ever; indeed I feel vigorously inclined to be five-and-twenty all my days, if it could be done. But the chequered years have told their tale; and nature will not be cajoled. The hey-day of the blood waits upon the judgment now; and every hour something befalls to remind me that I have almost crossed the open ground between two eternities, and am drawing near to the edge of the great forest, whose shades absorb us all. A thousand little things repeat the story of declining change with more impressive tone from day to day. I feel a glowing interest in stockings, overcoats, and mufflers, and I am beginning to look out for rain before I venture from the house, now. I am careful about the airing of clothes; and the boiling of gruel occupies my thoughts. In wet weather, I turn the soles of my boots to the fire before going to bed; and I tallow my nose sometimes. The price of flannel is a consideration with me, and I linger about the woollen-draper's windows, looking at

stuff for overcoats. I am learned in all sorts of dodges for inducing sleep; yet I lie brooding through the watches of the night; and rise in a morning to see how the sly old delver, Time, is getting on with the ridges in my forehead. The thought of a damp bed makes me shudder from head to foot. I should as soon think of sleeping in a water-butt. The changes of the weather have found me out at last; and I become more barometrical every day. Bits of rheumatism begin to wander about my bones, like fierce invaders in search of a settlement. I have attacked them hotly, and have driven them from one point to another; but they return upon me again and again,—like the Danes of old,—and I fear it will end in their wresting some part of the kingdom from me. I will fight them to the uttermost, and then make the best terms I can; though I fear we shall never be able to dwell in peace together. I wear more flannel now; I lie awake, thinking things over; and when I get up, I prefer tepid water to bathe in. The cold plunge is too much for me. I know that I have a stomach now, and I have to take care what I give it to do. As winter draws near, I strengthen my old fortress with outworks of woollen, and wait the enemy's attack with a vigilance which is the growth of painful experience. I am growing learned in herbal decoctions; and, indeed, if things go on as they are going on now, I shall soon be an old foggy all over. Happily for me, however, the heart feels young still; and I believe the mind grows clearer, and more serene. How long this blessed state may be granted to me I know not. I can only feel thankful that it is so now, and hope for its continuance. Perhaps, however, I may be deceiving myself a little in this

latter respect, and other people may perceive indications of mental decay in me that I am unconscious of; for that wise old Gascon chatterer, Montaigne, told the sad truth when he said "Age imprints more wrinkles in the mind than it does in the face, and souls are never, or very rarely seen, that in growing old do not smell sour and musty. Man moves altogether both towards perfection and decay." And so it is,—body and mind walk the mortal journey in company, and play into each other's hands all the way. The problem of their connection is difficult to deal with. The body is often stronger than the mind; and sometimes a noble soul is poorly housed in a frail tenement of clay. But in spite of all seeming discrepancies, it is the soul that writes its history in this mortal form,—for "soul is form, and doth the body make,"—although the reason why this body and this face are so and so, may stretch far back through generations gone by, and involve subtleties of relationship beyond the reach of mortal ken. Coleridge says,—"There is in every human countenance either a history or a prophecy which must sadden, or at least soften, every reflecting observer." Now and then, we meet with a face extremely sensitive to the impression of passing events, which frankly reveals the inward emotions; and, here and there, a worn countenance, unusually susceptible of the ravages of time, and written all over with sad records of the past.

The faded form is often marked with sorrow more than years;
The wrinkle on the cheek may be the course of secret tears;
The mournful lip may murmur of a love it ne'er confessed;
And the dimness of the eye betray a heart that cannot rest.

Apart from one's own personal experiences, all that is

going on outside of ourselves marks the transitory tenure of existence, and reminds us continually that

Our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

As I sit at my window, I notice how much older so and so is looking ; I hear of this man's decline, and of that man's disaster ; and I see, by the falling swathes around me, that the fatal mower is at work by night and day. The post brings to me, more frequently now than ever, the funeral cards of friends who are falling away like leaves in wintry weather. These things remind one that death's fleets are cruising where life's current flows, and they sometimes make me

Feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed.

But whilst we cannot but sigh to see those around whom the tendrils of our hearts have twined, gliding from us into the waste of time, is it not a blessing to feel undiminished sympathy with the stream of life still rippling by? Why brood so sadly upon the great, benign, and inevitable change? To a wise mind decay is as beautiful as growth ; and death is the sleep that refreshes the tired workman for a new day :—

For what is life,
But duty's strife :
A fitful day of sun and cloud ;
A flower ; a shade ;
A journey made
Between a cradle and a shroud.

An arrow's flight ;
A taper's light ;
A drill ; a watchful sentry's round ;
A short campaign
For deathless gain ;
A bivouac on battle ground.

Oh, what is death ?
A swordless sheath :
A jubilee ; a mother's call ;
A kindly breast
That offers rest
Unto the poorest of us all.

Let us not be unwisely sad, then, but bide our time ; and face the change with quiet hearts. I have passed the June of life ; but some plants bloom late, and I shall be glad to find it so with me ; for though my joys are more akin to contemplation than they used to be, I do not feel disposed to regret that in the least. It is indeed no small blessing to feel the evening of life drawing on clear and calm after a stormy day ; with the experience enriched, the judgment chastened, and the feelings still alive to kindly emotions. In some happy natures the heart never seems to grow old, and it is the heart that makes the life. To have crossed the perilous ocean of youth, and find one's bark gliding at last into smoother waters, from whence he can see the green shore where his voyage ends, it is a thing to be thankful for. Montaigne says, " 'Tis one main obligation I have to fortune that the succession of my bodily estate has been carried on to the natural seasons. I have seen the grass, the blossoms and the fruit, and now see the tree withered ; happily, however, because naturally. I bear the infirmities I have the better, because they came not till I had reason

to expect them, and because, also, they make me with greater pleasure remember the long felicity of my past life.”
. . . In the meantime, it is getting far on in the afternoon with me. The ordinary hours of labour are nearly past, and I am not sure that I shall be wanted to make “over-time.” It is as well to get one’s work done, while there is a little light left in the sky.

And when, at the last, I throw off this frail covering,
Which I’ve worn for three score years and ten ;
On the brink of the grave I’ll not seek to keep hovering,
Nor my thread wish to spin o’er again ;
But my face, in the glass, I’ll serenely survey,
And counting each wrinkle and furrow,
Hope this old, worn-out stuff, which is threadbare to-day,
May become everlasting to-morrow.





An Old Nest.

CHAPTER I.

A pleasing land of drowsyhead it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
And of gay castles in the cloud that pass,
For ever flushing round the summer sky ;
There eke the soft delights that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures ever hovered nigh ;
But whate'er smack'd of 'noyance or unrest,
Was far, far off from this delicious nest,

THOMSON.

MUCH has been said about the beneficent influence of change of scene upon the invalid,—especially of such change as can woo the mind from overstrained habits of thought to something new and agreeable to the natural disposition of the patient. Its salutary effect, then, is great indeed ; and I experienced an instance of this at the end of last April, during my first visit to the old town of Beverley, at the foot of the Yorkshire wolds. My little sojourn there was like a refreshing sleep, “full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing ;” and I came

back from it, fresh and strong, and with a new relish to the old life again.

It was seven o'clock on a lovely Sunday morning when I left Manchester. The streets of the city were sleeping in noiseless repose ; and a spell of quiet pleasure lay on all the late excited scene, as we rode through East Lancashire and across the West Riding of Yorkshire,—that picturesque land of hill and dale,—so much changed since the days when Robin Hood and his merry men roved its gay greenwoods and forest glades. As the thick-chimneyed regions of manufacture faded away from the departing train, and varied scenes of rural beauty began to flit by the window, it was refreshing to feel myself gradually launching from the smoky shores of bustle into a sea of soothing greenery ; where drowsy hamlets, and half-shaded farmsteads, and little sequestered nests of country life, lay moored in peace amidst the quiet tide of returning verdure.

The season was “forward,” as we say in the north. It was more like June than April ; and everything from earth to sky seemed to thrill with joyful anticipation. Warm suns, genial winds, and soft clouds dropping fatness, had “coaxed the timid verdure along the hills,” before the usual time. The cautious pace of slow-returning spring had been speeded by the impatient fulness of nature's coming bounty ; and vegetation was, everywhere, bursting into the luxuriance of summer time. The woods,—lately so silent,—were now gay with flowers that love the shade ; and they were beginning to fill with that restless buzz of life which crowds the air of summer with mysterious music. The heart of the wild bird was overflowing with delight, and he was gladdening the

fast leafing groves with sweet salutation. Once more the buttercup and the daisy had come, hand in hand, to star the emerald-mantled fields with simple beauty. The white flower of the holly had opened its folds to the sun ; and the prickly furze was lighting up waste places of the earth with golden flowers. The blossom was opening upon the hawthorn ; and the lily of the valley, with its two broad leaves and delicate bells of snow, was in full loveliness. And on the dusty borders of the public way,—even between the stones of the street,—the red-white blossoms of the medicinal knot grass peeped out in unregarded beauty, content to smile its little hour away, and be trodden down, or passed unheeded by. Every breeze scattered bloom from the pear-trees, and the apple-trees were beginning to show the flowery promise of abundant fruit. The pasture lands were all sprinkled with sheep, and with their milk white lambs, which stared with eyes full of pretty wonderment, and then went frisking away, in a toddling kind of canter, to the fleecy shelter of their dams, as we rattled by. Thus, hour after hour, we sped through the spring-robed landscapes, till the sound of “church-going bells” came pealing across the quiet fields, from grey towers hidden by the country green,—“like a voice from the middle ages,”—and long before we reached the shore of New Holland, in Lincolnshire, where I had to cross the Humber, to Hull, a soothing tone of pleasure had begun to refresh my mind,—like a shower of soft rain descending upon parched ground. . . . The trip across the Humber, too, was an exhilarating feature of my journey ; the salt breeze stirred my heart with a new delight. As I drew nearer to the grand

old many-mooded sea, I felt myself moved more and more by its solemn witchery ; and the low-lying banks of the Humber, with the ancient towns and villages dotting the far-stretching plains on either side, woke up a world of historic images, amongst which the ancient sea-kings of the north, descending upon those easily-accessible shores, in their "nailed barks," mingled in a dreamy way.

I met my friends on the landing place at Hull. Dinner was already ordered at one of the principal inns ; and at once we took our way thitherwards. The week-day bustle of the port had sunk down into sabbatical stillness. The holiday folk,—who had come across in the steamer from the opposite shore,—were beginning to spread into sauntering driblets, on their way into the town, gaping and gazing to the right and left as they meandered along. A few sailors, mostly dressed in shore-going garb, were lounging about the quay and the streets thereby, in a lazy kind of deck-walk. Farther on, the town looked quiet and clean. There was a silent charm on all around. It was Sunday everywhere, and on everything,—Sunday,—the gem that buckles in the busy girdle of the week with peaceful beauty. There was hardly anybody in the streets except a few straggling parties of stolid-looking German emigrants, who crept about the footpaths, as if they were walking in sleep, or stood in silent knots, smoking listlessly, at the doors of their lodgings, and giving a still more somnolent tone to the general aspect of the town. It was Sunday ! There was a strange silence in the streets, and the shrill whistle of a railway train, in the distance, had all the air to itself.

Soon after dinner we rode off towards Beverley. The

town stands nine miles north of Hull, in the midst of a fertile plain, at the foot of the Yorkshire wolds. The green country clips it round like a moat of quiet beauty, as if to protect it from intrusion ; and as one approaches the place a drowsy stillness deepens upon the scene at every footstep. A general hush pervades the air ; and as the wind comes nigh, it seems to sink down to a fondling tone, and kind nature waves off from the quaint old town "whatever smacks of 'noyance or unrest," like a mother watching by the cradle of a sleeping child. . . . As we crossed this peaceful tract of nine miles between Hull and Beverley, where blossom from the orchard trees lay drifted upon the highway, I felt as if I was leaving the nineteenth century behind, and gliding into a land of slumbrous calm,—a somnolent pool of quaint-featured life left gleaming upon the shore of the past by the receding tide of modern change ; and the tranquil spell grew stronger as we rolled along. A little creeping sleep, full of antique visions, came over me, and by the time that the towers of Beverley Minster began to rise in solemn beauty above the plain, I was far gone in a mediæval trance.

What Liverpool is to the Irish, Hull is to the German race,—their natural landing-place in England. And it was so centuries ago. I met with a remote evidence of this in Beverley itself. We entered the town by a narrow street of quaint cottages, the foundations of which were, in many instances, evidently much older than the superstructure. This narrow street was "Fleming Gate," the quarter in which the ancient Flemings dwelt apart when they first introduced the woollen manufacture into England. To begin with, this smacked very strongly of the eld. These ancient towns

are full of interesting relics, which illustrate the bygone events and manners of the land. They peep out in many shapes and ways. They seem to flavour everything around ; and they catch a stranger's eye far more quickly than the eyes of those who have been born amongst them ; to whom they have become so familiar as almost to have lost their significance.

Our way led close by the cathedral, and I strained my neck through the window, trying to take in as much of the building as possible in such a glance ; but I was too pent-up to see anything more than fleeting patches of the lower details, so I leaned back in my seat, and quietly took what came in view ; inwardly resolving to pay the beautiful old pile a careful visit as soon as possible. . . . Being Sunday, there were very few people in the streets. It was the hour between the end of dinner-time and the beginning of "service-time." The old town was as still as a resting wheel ; and the noise we made in rattling along, rang with a lonely distinctness among the quiet houses, as if there was nothing astir in all Beverley, except ourselves. It looked like riding through a dream ; and as I peeped out, on this side and that, to see what the place was like, here a quaint gable, and there an antique window flitted past ; and I felt more and more that I was surrounded by things steeped in the memories of days gone by. It was a pleasant thing too, when we pulled up at the front of the "Beverley Arms," where I could rest awhile, after my long journey, and settle down to chew the cud of antiquarian fancies that were beginning to crowd upon me. And I found that hostelry a pleasant resting-place. For cleanliness, order, bounty, and

genial comfort, it is indeed a rare nest. Its situation, too, was attractive to me, for it stands immediately in front of St. Mary's Church,—a grand old building of mixed Gothic architecture ; and though it is in the town, it is in a serene and pleasant nook of it, where one can hear the rustle of trees, which are in sight, and can smell the country gardens, which are not far off. There I rested to my heart's content. In the evening I went to service in the cathedral ; but I had so little chance of seeing the building to advantage on that occasion that I will return to it again.

As I have said before, it was lovely weather, and enticing as my quarters were, I could not settle down to anything like a healthy lounge till I had shaken hands with the town itself. So, on the morning after my arrival, I sallied forth, with a mind in genial trim for a ramble among the grass-grown aisles of the past ; and it was a favourable day for such a stroll, for the very sky had a meditative appearance. The wind was refreshingly cool, and it came in soft, fitful puffs, which seemed to pause, and loiter round, and lean against the walls, here and there, and then fall fast asleep, one after another, as if their sole business was to fan the repose of the old town, and sweeten its quiet streets with the odours of spring, and then lie down and snooze out the rest of the day. And now and then a cloud,—white as the down upon an angel's wing,—as it sailed with placid grace athwart the sun, trailed its dreamy shade across the market-place with a soothing caress that deepened the quietness around. Everything in sight seemed to be steeped in a strange soporific influence. The people on the streets looked as if they had all been wakened too soon, and were thinking of

going to sleep again. It almost made one afraid to set his feet down, for fear of disturbing something. So profound was the stillness that I could hear somebody lazily stir the fire, and then lay the poker down, in a cottage, as I crept by. The soft enchantment began to make me drowsy too; and I had to nip myself to keep my eyes open,—like a man listening to a long sermon on a hot summer day, after a plentiful meal. I felt almost too lazy to remember anything; but somehow it brought to mind what the poet says of the voyagers who came at length to a land “where it always seemed afternoon.” It was, indeed, a spell-bound spot. And then, as I meandered “with wandering steps and slow,” about the streets I caught many a charming glimpse of the Minster, from different points of view, for the beautiful old edifice overshadows the whole place with its solemn dignity, steeping the town in its sacred, historic spell, and suffusing all the air with an antique calm, as it stands, in the midst of its ancient graveyard,—

Like a mother, waiting
Till her children come from play.

There was something dreamily-delightful about the whole scene,—the clearness of the air, the quietness and cleanliness of the streets, the peeping bits of quaint architecture here and there, the cosy old rookeries nestling about the Minster, redolent of the humours of generations long since mowed down by Time, one after another, like swathes of grass; the general appearance of slow-grown comfort; the contemplative sky that canopied the scene with soft beauty,—like a cradle-cover; and the tranquil charm that enfolded

all. . . . I lingered in the market-place a little while. It was as still as the middle of an old cloister. The very stones of the pavement leaned sleepily against one another, pillowed by the grass which grew between. And as I gazed around, with half-shut eyes, a dog came rushing out of a butcher's shop, followed (I can hardly say pursued) by the butcher himself, who was evidently too fat and too easy-minded to run far, especially with any furious purpose. The dog thought so too ; for as soon as it had got out of slinging-distance, it turned round and barked in his face with a visible relish of the fun of the thing ; whilst the butcher stood still at his own threshold, wiping away the dew from his not-too-solid flesh,—for he was a man naturally inclined to “the melting mood.” The solitary din recoiled from the walls around, which seemed to rub their eyes and look dreamily down to see what was the matter ; and then, with a yawn, they slowly drooped their heavy lids, and went to sleep again. And once more all was still, except the sparrows twittering, and pecking among the scatterments of last market day. . . . I may have, unwittingly, dropt into Beverley at a time of unusual stillness ; if not, I wonder how the people get their living, for I could scarcely discover anything in the shape of business going on. And still the inhabitants look as if they didn't care, and didn't need to care. Indeed, the shopkeepers seemed surprised at the sight of a customer,—that is if one happens to succeed, by dint of shouting and kicking the counter, in rousing such a wight from his downy lair, in the rear of the premises. Between breakfast and dinner time, they seem to have a neighbourly way of sauntering from door to door, bidding one

another "good morning," and inquiring about the progress of population in their several households,—that is, when the weather is fine; for, if it rains, they lean against their door-posts, and talk to one another across the street. And on sunny afternoons they come lounging to their thresholds, now and then, with a slow, aldermanic air, like whales rising to blow, and there they bask and yawn, and rub down their well-filled waistcoats, as if they had just awakened from a nap after dinner, and had nothing in the world to do but to get ready for the next meal. There is no visible squalor or scant amongst them. Taken as a whole, they have a kind of endowed look; and they seem as if they had all been born with money in the bank, and didn't need to stint the butter on their muffins. Each man of them bears himself, unconsciously, as if he was the eldest son of prosperity. It is very easy to be seen, too, that they are gifted with sound digestion, and that they get through a great deal of it, in a satisfactory way. They are a solid, rotund, respectable, canny, old-fashioned race; broad-fronted and broad-bottomed, and as sleek-skinned as moles; and they open their mild eyes in a quiet way, like well-fed kine chewing the cud; as if they had no idea of ever seeing anything of a disagreeable nature during the smooth-gliding term of their natural lives. They hardly seem to know that there is any world outside of their own garden-girdled town; or, if they do, they seem as if they didn't care about having anything to do with it. These smooth, self-contained pets of fortune, with good living oozing from every pore of their drum-tight skins,—they are too fat to laugh boisterously; but one massive smile seems to clothe them from head to foot, like

a suit of invisible mail ; rendering them impervious to the manifold troubles that beset less lucky humanity, on its way through this work-a-day world. Oh, ye happy-hearted lotus-eaters of the flowery wold ; may your handsome shadows never grow less !

And thus I wandered about the old town of Beverley for the first time, pleased with what I saw, and feeling myself from hour to hour still more refreshed by the quiet change. And I lost no time in extending my acquaintance with the local annals ; for an old friend lent me a copy of Poulson's admirable history, and I sat down to pore over its pages "between whiles ;" and thus I am enabled to give a few short notes on the subject, which may not be altogether out of place in another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The ancient hamlet seemed asleep
 Beneath the starry sky ;
 A little river sheathed in ice,
 Came gliding gently by ;
 The old church in the graveyard,
 Where "the rude forefathers lay,"
 Stood, like a mother, waiting
 Till her children came from play,

WILLY'S GRAVE,

BEVERLEY,—anciently Beverleg-a, Beverlacus, and Beverlac, "the lake of bevers,"—for so some antiquarians, probably following monkish traditions, profess to derive the name of the town ; and, in order

to give a colour to this theory, it has evidently been necessary to plunge into the mist of pre-historic times, and invent, or suppose,—for I cannot find that they give any stronger warrant for it,—they invent or suppose an extraordinary rise of the Humber which deluged the whole of that part of the country, leaving a lake at or near to the place called Beverley, which lake became a great haunt of beavers. The thing is not utterly impossible, but it is not very likely. There is no lake there now; and the country around looks as level as a bowling-green. Other writers, however, derive the name from *Ped-war-llech*, the ancient *Petouaria*, marked, as other British towns seem to have been, by “four stones.” Towns of “four stones” are mentioned repeatedly in the old romances of King Arthur. In this instance, the “four stones” of Beverley were stones of sanctuary. So saith Poulson’s history of the town. This ancient privilege of sanctuary seems to have been granted or confirmed to Beverley by King Athelstane, after the great battle of Brunanburg, by which he became monarch of all England. There is now in Beverley Minster a massive Saxon chair, or seat, hewn from one block of stone, called “the mercy seat,” or “chair of sanctuary,”—one of the most ancient and interesting relics in all the town. This “Fridstool,” or “Freedstool,” is connected with the ancient privilege of sanctuary, appertaining to the monastery at Beverley. The criminal who fled for sanctuary thither was free from all danger incurred by his crime so long as he was seated in this chair. In the ninth year of Richard the Second, Sir John Holland, afterwards Duke of Exeter, the king’s half-brother, having slain Lord Ralph Stafford, in

the neighbourhood of Beverley,—around which place the king's army was quartered, whilst on its way to Scotland,—fled to the sanctuary at this place, and did not leave it until he had obtained the king's pardon. So saith old Froissart, the chronicler. Leland, who saw this ancient "Freedstool," describes it as bearing the following inscription :—"Hæc sedes lapidea Freedstool dicitur, *i.e.* Pacis Cathedra, ad quam reus fugiendo perueniēno omnimodam habet securitatem."

These eastern shores of England endured more of the warlike ravages of the Danes than the rest of the kingdom; and Beverley shared the common fate of that quarter in those wild times. In 867, the church and monastery was destroyed by the Danes, and the town was raided again and again by the same fierce warriors. In 1188, the town was burnt to the ground. The two great patrons of the place, in Saxon times, seem to have been King Athelstane, and Saint John of Beverley, the founder of the minster; and the effigies of the famous Saxon king, and the equally famous Saxon prelate, appear again and again, in stained glass and sculptured stone, upon its venerable walls and windows. Coming down to later times, Beverley was held, during the civil war, alternately by parliament and by king. The North Bar is a fine relic of the ancient walls of the town, and the remains of "The Grey Friars' Monastery" are full of interest to the antiquarian. The most remarkable features of the place, however, are its two noble old churches,—the Minster and St. Mary's Church. The Minster is reckoned amongst the most beautiful of all the cathedrals of England, and its history is almost the history of the town itself.

Beverley Minster stands upon slightly elevated ground, the site of a series of ancient churches, stretching far back into Anglo-Saxon times. Indeed, the local historians say that the town was founded by Lucius, a British king, in the reign of Aurelius Commodus, and that it is the *Petouaria* mentioned by Ptolemy. The same dim kind of tradition ascribes the foundation of the first Christian church upon this site to the same British king. Be that as it may, the authenticated history of Beverley Minster begins with "Saint John of Beverley," a Yorkshire monk, born at Driffeld, about the year 640,—the middle period of the Saxon Heptarchy. This must have been a remarkable man in those days, as the leading features of his life and character, given by the "Venerable Bede," distinctly show. He was born about forty years after the advent of St. Augustine. He received his first instructions under the Abbess Hilda, at Whitby. He was sent to Kent to study under Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. Returning to Whitby after the death of Hilda, he left that famous abbey, and wandered over the wild north of England, preaching and teaching. He founded a school, to which his reputation attracted many scholars, among whom was the celebrated Saxon historian Bede, who was ordained to the priesthood by his hand. Bede tells all this himself, at the end of his ecclesiastical history of those times. He became Bishop of Hexham, and afterwards Archbishop of York. After his elevation to York, he chose the quiet country at Beverley as the place of his retirement. Here "he found a church existing, which he beautified and enlarged, and he also founded a monastery, over which he placed his friend and deacon, Bercthun.

He often visited this monastery, and in 718, feeling the approach of old age, he resigned his archbishopric, and retired thither, to pass the remainder of his days in peace. He died there, in the year 721, and there he was buried. He was canonised by Pope John XX., in the year 1037. "In England, during many centuries, the name of 'Saint John of Beverley' was held in the highest reverence, and the fame of his supposed miracles was very widely spread. His sacred banner was carried in front of the army of King Athelstane, at the battle of Brunanburg; and afterwards the cry of 'St. John of Beverley!' nearly as often as that of 'St George!' particularly in the English wars against the Scots, gave courage to the soldier in the hour of battle." Such are the leading features in the life of Saint John of Beverley, gleaned by the local historians, chiefly from what is said by "The Venerable Bede" of his celebrated friend and tutor. In 1664 a vault was found in the present Minster, in which was a sheet of lead, containing ashes, beads, brass pins, and iron nails, and the following inscription, in Latin, on a leaden plate :—"In the year from the Incarnation of Our Lord 1185, this church was burnt in the month of September, the night after the feast of Saint Matthew the Apostle; and in the year 1197, the 6th of the Ides of March, there was an inquisition made for the relics of the Blessed John, in this place; and these bones were found in the east part of this sepulchre, and here deposited; and dust mixed with mortar was found likewise, and re-interred." These relics were re-interred in the middle aisle of the nave, where they had been taken up, with this addition to the ancient inscription:—"The same relics having been taken up, and replaced

in the same situation, were honoured with an arched brick vault, the 25th day of the month of March, 1726, when the chequered pavement of this church was first laid."

It was far on in a quiet afternoon when I went to visit Beverley Minster, ushered by a friend who felt the solemn interest of the place ; and the very approach to the building seemed to subdue the mind to a more meditative tone,—so subtle is the influence of these grand religious piles, which have grown out of the natural veneration of man for the Almighty Unseen. We lingered a few minutes in the grave-yard, amongst moss-grown records of mouldering humanity, which lay scattered around us,—like bits of wreck upon the shore of a boundless sea. The town itself was quiet ; but this spot was as still as the dead, except where the wind played with the grass between the grave-stones. There was nothing else astir in this solemn "God's acre," sown with the relics of mankind ; no other sound disturbed the stillness of the stately Minster in its midst,—that ancient "temple of silence and reconciliation, where the enmities of twenty generations lay buried,"—save the cawing of daws among its hoary pinnacles and buttresses. Wandering in that ancient grave-yard, where all sorts and conditions of men lie mouldering together in common decay, after their sand-glasses have run down, it made one think how frivolous are the "fuming shows and vanities of man." This is the dusty spot to which our yesterdays must lead us all. Here—

The slanderer lies the slandered near,
The coward by the bold ;
The foolish and the wise are here,
The fiery and the cold ;

Here kindly nature greens the turf,
Where nameless paupers sleep ;
And the lordling rots beside his serf,
Down in this wormy keep.

The knave has stolen to earth at last ;
The drunkard's had his fill ;
The glutton is the worm's repast ;
The liar's lying still ;
The soldier dreams no more of strife ;
The monarch's reign is past ;
The wretch who crawled his way through life,
Is over-crawled at last.

Here, sheltered by the kindly ground,
The outcast's woes have end ;
Where daisies gem the grassy mound,
He finds, at last, a friend ;
And there, above a patriot's bones,
To whom they grudged a crust,
They've raised a pile of graven stones
To celebrate his dust.

Addison tells us, in the *Spectator*, that when he was in a serious humour, he often walked by himself in Westminster Abbey, "when the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness which is not disagreeable." And he says, "When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies within me ; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out ; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion ; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those we must so quickly follow ;

when I see kings lying by those who deposed them ; when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates upon the tombs of some who died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together."

The exterior of the Minster was impressively beautiful, with its fine old sculptured incrustations, here mouldered with age, there broken away by the hand of the spoiler, leaving eloquent gaps and empty niches,—none the less fine for that ; and Time,—the destroyer of the living and the reviver of the dead,—had cushioned those old walls with the wonderful hues of age and decay. The changeful weather-stains and delicate moss-growths of centuries had laid tinge upon tinge till its exquisite details had become wealthy in tones of marvellous beauty. A "petrified poem," indeed, this was,—a rare piece of work from the hand of man,—a carven gem of thought ; a sculptured flower ; a sacred picture upon which Time, the finest colour painter of them all, had wrought for ages, with patient, tender, oft-returning touch,—as if it was a thing he loved to work upon. This "unravished bride of quietness and slow time," the glory of all the scene,—the old town, the green fields, the new-born flowers of spring, and the whole country around, seemed to look up to it, with reverent gaze, impressed with its solemn loveliness. This grand old fane, consecrated by the highest hopes of man, and by the sacred usage of centuries,—the

very daws cawing about its towers and pinnacles seemed like winged fragments of antiquity, which had grown old with the edifice they haunted. . . . But when we entered the building, all within was profoundly still, and the grand gloom therein was crowded with the most sacred memories of humanity. I have beheld great cities at dawn of day, when the sleeping scene was clothed in the beauty of the morning, and "all that mighty heart was lying still,"—I have roamed the wild hills at evening, when the soft twilight sank down upon the lonely moors,—but a fine old church, when there is no stir of human sound within, has a solemn beauty all its own. It is one of the grandest, gravest, loveliest places in all the world. Speech seems an intrusion in the awe-struck silence that pervades such a spot; nay, the very offices of religion seem to disturb a devotion more profound than they. Yet the suppressed, the breathless, the sacred stillness within that hoary monument of man's best thoughts is filled with suggestions that soothe and elevate the mind; and silence seems haunted by whole centuries of holy anthems, and yearning prayers,—the natural outcome of man's sense of dependence in the presence of the unseen Deity, "who sitteth in the highest heavens, in silence." Like the sea-shell, which, to the listening ear, seems to swell with the murmurs of the ocean, so the divine stillness within, surges with the holiest associations of twenty generations of mortality on its way from the cradle to the grave. I have often admired the passage in which Charles Lamb says, "Wouldst thou know the beauty of holiness?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the key from good Master Sexton, traverse the

cool aisles of some country church ; think of the piety that has kneeled there,—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there,—the meek pastor,—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee." And so, as we trod the stately aisles of this ancient Minster, our voices sank to a softer tone ; and the faint hum of the street outside sounded like murmurs of life from some ruder world.

With the exception of the choir-screen, there are few incongruities to destroy the antique unity of effect in Beverley Minster. The groinings and traceries, in some parts of the building, are wonderfully fine,—with floral wreaths here and there, so delicately sculptured that one might almost expect to hear them rustle. These beautiful details are occasionally mixed with grotesque devices,—the nightmares of the mediæval mind. The famous "Percy Shrine" is one of the most beautiful objects in the Minster. Leland, speaking of his first visit to the place, says :—"There be three tombs most notable on the north side of the quier, yn on one side of them under a chapel arched over is buried Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and his son, father of the last earl. In another is buried Eleanor, wife to one of the Lord Percys, and in another of white alabaster, Idonea, wife to one of the Lord Percys ; under Eleanor's tomb lies buried one of the Percys, a Preste." The Percy chapel contains the monument of Henry, fourth earl of Northumberland, who was slain at Cock Lodge, near Thirsk, on the 28th of April, 1489. "There are two figures on each

side at the entrance to the choir, intended to represent,—one the founder (Saint John of Beverley), and the other the benefactor of the church (King Athelstane).” The same personages are also to be seen in a painting on wood over the door of the south transept, where King Athelstane is represented as offering to St. John a charter of privilege in the following words:—

Als fre make I Thee
As Hart can think or Eye can see.

After the fine carved work of the choir, and the antiquated tombs, the most notable objects in the place are, the ancient Saxon “sanctuary chair,” or “mercy seat,” hewn from one block of stone; the beautiful chapel of the Virgin Mary, behind the altar screen; and the magnificent west window.

As I have said before, my quarters were at the “Beverley Arms,” in front of St. Mary’s Church, a fine building of mixed Gothic architecture. On the second floor of the inn, I occupied a sitting-room, facing the church, and I could not help thinking that the shadow of the grand old fane influences the hostelry with something of its own dignity. It seemed to affect the language and deportment of the customers who visited the house, and of the servants who attended to them. The waiters whispered, with a reverential air, as if it was close upon service-time, and the organ was just about to strike up; and their softened footsteps seemed subdued by a sense of something fine in the neighbourhood. The “Beverley Arms” might have been a vestry of the church; for they waited upon one with a kind of solemn assiduity, as if he was an abbot of the olden time

Indeed, there was an air of cloistral calm about the whole place. It was like sitting in an old monastic refectory ; and the landlord himself had something of the quaintness and subdued geniality of an ancient cellarer. It was a rare pleasure to sit by the open window of that upper room, in front of St. Mary's Church, watching the creaky motions of an aged man, who was mowing the grassy spaces between the grave-stones, in the church-yard. The building, the grave-yard, the old mower, and the quietude around, were all in fine harmony. It was an exquisite picture ; and the effect was heightened by the cloud-chequered sunshine playing beautiful changes of light and shade among the buttresses, and pinnacles, and elaborately-wrought window-recesses of the church. That old mower was evidently drawing near to the edge of the great forest, into whose shade all things human disappear, to return no more. His white hair streamed in the wind as he slowly swept down the grass above the dwellings of the dead. "All flesh is grass." The mower, the moss-grown grave-stones, the grave-grown grass, the fitful sunshine at play upon the old building, the scattered blossom, the quiet-waving trees, and the sighing wind,—whose soft cadences came distinctly upon the ear in the stillness around,—it was altogether a beautiful and a touching scene.

My short sojourn at the old town of Beverley left many pleasing pictures upon my memory ; and it was a beneficial change to body and mind. And it was not until I got to the railway station, amongst the bustle of trains, and tickets, and trucks, and corduroy-clad porters, that I felt that I was waking to the life of the nineteenth century again.



Rostherne Mere.

(A CHESHIRE SKETCH.)

Though much the centuries take, and much bestow,
Most through them all immutable remains—
Beauty, whose world-wide empire never wanes,
Sole permanence 'mid being's ceaseless flow.
These leafy heights their tiny temple owe
To some rude hero of the Saxon thanes,
Whom, slowly pricking from the neighbouring plains,
Rapt into votive mood the scene below.
Much, haply, he discerned, unseen by me—
Angels and demons hovering ever near ;
But most he saw and felt, I feel and see—
Linking the "then" and "there" with "now" and "here,"
The grace serene that dwells on grove and lea,
The tranquil charm of little Rostherne Mere.

F. ESPINASSE.

ROSTHERNE MERE was a pet theme with a young friend of mine, and we started together towards that place, at noon, one Sunday in June. Walking up to the Oxford Road Station, we paid our sixpences, and got our tickets to Bowdon, which is the nearest point to Rostherne Mere, by rail ; being four miles from the latter place. The day was fine, and the sky clear, except

where gauzy clouds floated across it with dreamy grace ; as if they had come out for a holiday. Everything seemed to feel that it was Sunday. The fields and groves were drest in their best. It was the Sabbath of the year with them. In a few minutes our fiery steed had whirled us to Bowdon ; and we walked up the wooden steps that led from the station. Turning to the left at the top, we struck into a quiet road that leads in the direction of Rostherne. Bowdon bells were ringing to church as we walked along, surrounded by singing birds, and sunshine, and sweet odours from cottage-gardens by the wayside. Now and then a young sylph, of graceful face and timid mien, tripped past us, in the garb of a lady,—on her way to church, with her books before her ; then a knot of pretty, brown-faced village girls, with wild flowers in their hands, going the same way, with all the innocent vivacity of childhood in their look and gait ; anon came slowly wending up the path an old couple, bending with age,—the history of a simple life of honourable toil written in their faces, and their attire wearing that touching air which always marks the struggle which decent poverty makes to put its best appearance on. The road, which seemed to be little frequented, shortly brought us to Ashley Hall, a picturesque woodland mansion. A fine avenue of ancestral trees shade the walk to the porch of the old hall, which nestles behind the present modern building. The outbuildings are antiquated and extensive. The house still wears the appearance of an abode of comfort and elegance, blent with that quaint charm which hangs about all fine, old-fashioned rural dwellings. Nothing seemed to be stirring in or about the hall but the wind, the birds, and the

trees; and the two large stone sphinxes in front of the porch looked like petrified genii, so profound was the repose of this green nook. Outside the house the grass was growing over everything; even over the road we walked on, it was creeping. For some distance the road-side was pleasantly soft to the foot with springy verdure, and thick-leaved trees overhung the highway,—

That faire did spread
Their arms abroad, with gray mosse overcaste;
And their green leaves, trembling with every blast,
Made a calm shadow far in compasse round,

until we began to descend into the green pastures of a little vale, through which a clear river winds its murmuring way. A widow lady stood in the middle of the path, waiting till her little orphan lad and his sister drove a herd of cows from the field by the water-side. There was the shade of grief on her pale face, and she returned our salutation with pensive courtesy. We loitered a few minutes by the gate and helped the lad and his sister to gather the cattle, and then went on, thinking of the affecting group we left behind us. The wild flowers were plentiful and fine by the way, especially that little blue-eyed beauty, the "Forget-me-not, which grew in great profusion about the hedges. A drove of hungry-looking Irish cattle came wearily up the road, driven by a frieze-coated farmer, who rode upon a rough pony, that never knew a groom; and behind him limped a bare-footed drover, eagerly munching a lump of dry loaf, as he urged forward a two-days-old calf by a twist in the tail,—an old application of the screw-propelling principle, which

is very effectual with all kinds of dilatory animals, with tails on. He was the very picture of poverty, and yet there was a gay-hearted archness on his brown face; and he gave us the "good day" merrily. The very flutter of his rags seemed to have imbibed the care-defying gaiety of the curious biped they hung upon,—with such tender attachment. The whole country was one tranquil scene of fertile verdure, frequently flat for the length of a mile or two; but gently-undulated in some places, and picturesquely wooded. In a vista of nearly two miles, not a human foot was on the road but ours; and every sight and sound that greeted the senses as we sauntered along the blossomy hedge-side, in the hot sunshine, was serenely-sweet and rural. Skirting the wall of Tatton Park, we came to a substantial farmhouse, near the highway, and opening the gate, we walked up to it, to get a few minutes rest, and a drink. At our request, a girl at the door of the house brought us a large jugful of churn-milk, which, when she had reached us a seat in the garden, we drank as we sat in the sun. In the yard, a little fat legged urchin had crept, with his "porritch-pot," under the nose of a large chained dog, about twice the size of himself, and sat there, holding his spoon to the dog's mouth, childishly beseeching him to "sup it." The good-natured brute kept a steady eye on us while we were in sight, postponing any notice of his little playmate. By direction of the good-wife, we took a by-path which led towards the village. The country folk were returning from church, and among them a number of little girls, wearing a head dress of pure white, but of a very awkward shape. What was the meaning, or what the use, of the badge they wore, I could not exactly tell.

We found that, though the village had many pretty cottage homes, dropped down irregularly among the surrounding green, it consisted chiefly of one little street of rural houses, of very pleasant appearance. Here and there, a latticed window was open to the front, showing a small parlour, scrupulously clean and orderly ; the furniture old fashioned, substantial, and carefully polished ; and the Bible "gleaming through the lowmost window-pane," under the shade of myrtle-pots, and fuschias in full flower. As we looked about us for the church, a gentleman in the garb of a clergyman stepped out of one of the houses, which, though a whitewashed dwelling, of simple construction, and of no great size any way, still had something peculiarly attractive in its retired position, and an air of superiority about the taste and trimness of all its appurtenances. He had a book in one hand, and leaned forward in his walk,—not from infirmity, for he was hale and active,—but as if to give impetus to his progress, which seemed to have an earnest purpose somewhere. This gentleman was the Rev. Joseph Horder, the Vicar of Rostherne. We inquired of him the way to the church. "Come up this way," said he, in an agreeable tone, but without stopping in his walk. "Have you never seen it before ?" "Never." "Here it is, then," he replied, as we entered the church-field at the top of the knoll. The sudden appearance of the venerable fane, and its picturesque situation, called forth an involuntary expression of admiration from us. We walked on slowly, scanning the features of the solemnly beautiful scene. The vicar then inquired where we came from, and when we answered "Manchester," he went on, "Well, now, I don't at all

wonder, nor much object to you Manchester gentlemen, pent up as you are the whole week, coming out on a Sunday to breathe a little country air, and to look on the woods and fields, but I should be better pleased to see you come in time to attend divine worship, which would be a double benefit to you. You might easily do it, and it would enhance the pleasure of your ramble, for you would go home again doubly satisfied with all that you had seen. Don't you think you would, now?" It needed no Socratic effort on his part to obtain our assent to such a sentiment, so kindly expressed. As we walked on, he brought us dexterously to the north-west corner of the church, the best point of view, looking down through the trees, from the summit of the hill on which the church stands, upon Rostherne Mere in all its beauty. There it lay, in the bosom of the valley below, as smooth and bright as a plate of burnished silver, except towards the middle, where the wind embossed it with fantastic ripples, which shimmered in the sunlight; and it was all fringed round with the rich meadows, and plummy woods,—sloping down to the edge of the water. From the farther side, a finely-wooded country stretched away as far as we could see, till the scene ended in a dim amphitheatre of moorland hills, rising up, from east to west, on the horizon. In front of us, and about four miles beyond the lake, the pretty village of Bowdon and its ancient church were clearly in sight above the woods. It was, altogether, a very beautiful English scene. And it is a pity that this lovely little oasis is not better known to the jaded hearts that fret themselves to death in Manchester, and rush here and there, in crowds, to fill all the world's

telescopes ; the majority of them, perhaps, like me, little dreaming of the existence of so sweet a spot so near them. By the side of the mere, where the water was as placid as glass, being sheltered from the wind by the woods on its shelvy banks, we were delighted with a second edition of the scenery on the margin, and of the skies above, clearly reflected in the seemingly unfathomable deeps of the water.

The vicar had left us, and gone into the church, requesting us, when we had feasted our fill on the outside, to follow him, and look through the inside of the church. We lifted the latch, but seeing him addressing a number of young people, who sat round him in attentive attitude, we shut the door quietly, and walking round to the porch on the opposite side, went in, on tiptoe. Standing silent under the organ-loft, we listened, while he impressed upon his young flock the nature and intent of confirmation, and the necessity for their understanding the solemn obligation implied thereby, and devoutly wishing to undertake it, before they could be admitted to partake of it. "And now," said he, "if any of you don't quite understand anything I am saying to you, don't be afraid to say so. I shall be glad to know it, that I may make it clear to you. For you must remember, that it is not what I say to you that will be of use to you, but what you understand of it." He then consulted them about the best times in the following week for them to meet him, that he might assist such as were wishful to prepare for the ceremony. He asked "Thomas," and "Mary," and "Martha," how four o'clock would suit them on certain days, and when they whispered that "half-past seven would suit them better," he replied, "I dare say it will ;

and let it be so, then." He then repeated the pleasure it would give him to meet them at that or any other hour on certain days next week, to help, and examine them. It was only changing his dinner hour a little. We walked quietly out as he began to catechise them, postponing our examination of the interior till a fitter opportunity.

Rostherne churchyard is a singularly retired spot. A solemn repose mingles with the natural charms of everything about it, increased by the antiquity of its relics. Though near the village, it is approached from it by a gentle ascent, from the head of which it slopes away, clean out of the sight of the village, and is bounded on the west side by a row of sombre old trees, through which Rostherne Hall is seen, in the midst of woods and gardens. No other building except the church is in sight; and a sweeter spot for the life-wearied body to take its last rest in, could hardly be imagined. As I walked about this quiet graveyard, which is environed by scenery of such a serene kind, that nature itself seems afraid to disturb the repose of the sleepers, upon whose bed the leaves tremble silently down; and where I could hear no sounds but a drowsy rustle of the neighbouring trees,—I thought of Gray's inimitable "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard :"—

Beneath these rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from her straw-built shed,
The cock's sweet clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For then no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to the sickle yield ;
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
 How jocund did they drive their team a-field !
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure ;
 Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Await alike the inevitable hour ;
 The paths of glory lead—but to the grave.

.

Yet e'en these bones, from insult to protect,
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unletter'd muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply ;
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

This poem,—the finest of the kind in the English language,—might, with equal fitness, have been written of this peaceful churchyard of Rostherne village. Man, whom Quarles calls a “worm of five feet long,” is so liable to have his thoughts absorbed by the art of keeping himself bodily alive, that he is none the worse for a hint from the literature of the churchyard :—

Art is long, and life is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

We walked over the gravestones, reading the inscriptions, some of which had a strain of simple pathos in them, such as the following:—

Ye that are young, prepare to die,
For I was young, and here I lie.

Others there were in this, as in many other burial-places, which were either unmeaning, or altogether unsuitable to the situation they were in. There were several half-sunken headstones in different parts of the yard, mostly bemossed and dim with age. One or two were still upright; the rest leaned one way or other. These very mementoes, which pious care had set up, to keep alive the memories of those who lay mouldering in the earth below, were sinking into the graves of those they commemorated.

At the outside of the north-east entrance of the church, lies an ancient stone coffin, dug up a few years ago in the graveyard. Upon the lid of the coffin was sculptured the full length figure of a knight, in a complete suit of mail, with sword and shield. No further clue has been obtained to the history of this antique coffin and its effigy, than that it belonged to one of the Cheshire family of Venables, whose crest and motto ("Sic Donec") it bears. The church contains many interesting monuments, belonging to this and other families of the old gentry of Cheshire. Several of these are of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

But the finest and most interesting monuments in the church, as works of art, are those belonging to the Egerton family, of Tatton Park. At a suitable time, the sexton occasionally takes a visitor up to the gate which separates the Egerton seat and monuments from the rest of the church, and, carefully unlocking it, ascends two steps with softened footfall, and leads him into the storied sanctum of the Lords of Tatton ; where, among other costly monuments, he will be struck by the chaste and expressive beauty of a fine modern one, in memory of a young lady belonging to this family. On a beautiful tomb, of the whitest marble, the figure of a young lady reclines upon a mattress and pillow of the same, in the serenest grace of feature and attitude : and “the rapture of repose” which marks the expression of the countenance, is a touching translation, in pure white statuary, of those beautiful lines in which Byron describes the first hours of death :—

Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.

At the back of the recumbent lady, an exquisite figure of an angel kneels, and leans forward with delicate grace, watching over the reposing form, with half-opened wings, and one hand slightly extended over the dead. The effect of the whole is exceedingly beautiful, chaste, and saddening. The monument is kept carefully covered with clean white handkerchiefs, except when the family is present, when it is uncovered, until their departure. Before I was admitted to view this beautiful memorial, I had heard something of the story which it illustrates, and I inquired further of the sexton

respecting it. The old man said that the young lady had been unwell only a few days previous to the evening of her death, and on that evening the family physician thought her so much better, and felt so certainly expectant of a further improvement in her health, that he directed her attendants to get her to repose, and then they might themselves safely retire to rest for a little while. They did so; and returning soon found her still lying precisely as they had laid her, and looking so placid in feature, that they did not know she was dead, until they came to find her quite cold. The monument represents her as she was thus found. As I stood looking upon this group of statuary, the evening sun shone through the southern windows of the old church, and the sexton,—who evidently knew what the effect would be,—lowered the crimson blind of the window nearest the monument. This threw a soft rich crimson hue over the white marble tomb, the figures, and the sculptured drapery, which gave it an inexpressibly rich appearance. So white and clean was the whole, that the white handkerchiefs which the sexton had taken off the figures, and laid upon the white basement of the tomb, looked like part of the sculpture.

The church is dedicated to St. Mary. It is proved to have existed long prior to 1188. The present steeple was erected in 1741. There is something venerable about the appearance of an old ecclesiastical building, which continually and eloquently preaches, without offending. Apart from all questions of doctrines, formulas, and governments, I often feel a veneration for an old church, akin to that expressed by him who said that he never passed one without feeling disposed to take off his hat to it.

The sun was setting westward over the woods, and we began to think of getting a quiet meal somewhere before we went back. There is generally an old inn not far from an old church. "How it comes, let doctors tell;" but it is so; and we began to speculate upon the chance of finding one in this case. Going out of the churchyard at the lowest corner, through the old lich-gate, a flight of steps led us down into a green dingle, embosomed in tall trees, and there, in front of us, stood a promising country "hostelrie," under the screen of the woods. We looked an instant at its bright window, and its homely and pleasant appurtenances, and then, with assured minds, darted in, to make a lunge at the larder. "A well-conducted inn is a thing not to be recklessly sneered at in this world of ours, after all," thought I. We sat down in a shady little room in front, and desired the landlord to get us some tea, with any substantial stomach-gear that was handy and plentiful. In a few minutes a snowy cloth was on the table, followed by "neat-handed Phillis," with the tea things. A profusion of strong tea, and toast, and fine cream, came next, in beautiful china and glass ware; the whole crowned with a huge dish of ham and poached eggs, of such amplitude, that I began to wonder who was to join us. Without waste of speech, we fell to, with all the appetite and enjoyment of Sancho at Camacho's wedding. The landlord kept popping in, to see that we wanted nothing, and to urge us to the attack; which was really a most needless though a generous office. After tea, we strolled another hour by the edge of the water, then took the road home, just as the sun was setting. The country was so pleasant, and we so refreshed, that we

resolved to walk to Manchester, and watch the sinking of the summer twilight among the woods and fields by the way. Our route led by the edge of Dunham Park, and through Bowdon, where we took a peep at the church, and the expansive view from the churchyard. There is a fine old yew tree in Bowdon churchyard, seated around. The road from Bowdon to Manchester passes through a country which may be truly characterised as the market-garden of Manchester. We went on, through the villages of Altrincham, Sale Moor, and Stretford, thinking of his words who said,—

One impulse from a vernal wood
Will teach thee more of man,
Of moral evil, and of good,
Than all the sages can.

It was midnight when I got to bed, and sank into a sound sleep, to wake in the morning among quite other scenes. But while I live, I shall not easily forget “the tranquil charm of little Rostherne Mere.”





Saint Catherine's Chapel;

OR

The Pretty Island Bay.

O blest retreat and sacred, too !
Sacred as when the bell of prayer
Tolled duly on the desert air,
And crosses decked thy summits blue.

ROGERS.

THE shores of the Isle of Man are remarkable for their variety of indentation, especially at the southern end of the island. There its most interesting scenery may be found ; bold, rugged headlands, beautiful bays, and savage ravines, where the wild ocean churns and thunders in majestic fury. But from the ruin-crested rock of Peel,—so rich in venerable memorials of the past,—all round the shores of “the fairy isle,” there is not a more charming spot than Port Erin, a little crag-defended bay at the southern end of the island, about five miles west of Castletown. The outer shores of this part of the island are wildly fantastic ; the mountains cluster grandest there, and the inland scenery is fertile and picturesque. Bold and rugged as the entrance to Port

Erin is from the sea, all is quiet, and sweet, and sheltered at the head of the bay. The contrast is striking, and pleasing to the mind. The little fishing hamlet looks out contemplatively between those wild, flanking rocks at the entrance across the blue waters, to where the mountains of Morne and Wicklow, in Ireland, show their faint outlines in the west. The bay, from the point where the headlands,—Brada on the north side, and The Cassels on the south side of the entrance,—front each other, like sentinels placed to guard the little nest beyond from all ravage of the sea, is about half a mile across, and about a mile inland. From that point up to the hamlet at the head of the water, Port Erin is a pleasant seclusion, sweetly retired, even on the landward side, from bustle of any kind, except such as the sea makes when a strong west wind brings Neptune's white-maned horses into the little bay in full career. Then, indeed, Port Erin wears an aspect of a nobler and more spirit-stirring kind. But, even then, when the spray is flying over the thatched roofs of the fishermen's cottages, low down, near to the beach, the briny tumult is mere child's play in a nursery nook, compared to the roaring majesty with which the billows of the Atlantic wilderness rage among the creeks, and chasms, and craggy headlands outside. At such a time, the thunders of the sea in the Sound, which divides the Calf Island from the main land, and amongst the storm-worn headlands that overfrown the ocean immediately beyond the entrance to Port Erin, come upon the ear of the listener, in his pleasant shelter at the head of the bay, like the boom of distant war. But when the wind is still, the clear tide fondles up the beach at the

foot of the village, as if it was glad to see that quiet nook of Mona's Isle once more. Lipping the delicately-mottled strand with liquid grace, it creeps lovingly up towards Port Erin's green shore. Full of beautiful sounds, and hues, and motions, it comes, with tender caresses, croodling its dreamy sea-song; and, as it rises in gentle sweeps nearer and nearer to the cottages where fishermen dwell, at the foot of the villaged slope, it flings fresh shells upon the sand with every surge,—like a fond traveller returning home laden with memorials of his journey, which show that he has been thinking of those he loved, when far away.

But let us sit down upon some pleasant "coigne of vantage" at the head of the bay, and look at the quaint little village there. The hotel, called the "Falcon's Nest," looks right out to sea from the head of the bay. It crowns a green slope of grass-bound sand, which rises from behind an irregular line of old thatched cottages upon the beach, not far from the head of the tide. There is a green terrace in front of the hotel at the head of the slope, where I have many a time sat and looked about me with delight upon a summer's day. At one end of the terrace there is a sundial; at the other a rusty old cannon,—a relic of the Spanish Armada. It was found in the water below Spanish Head, hard by Port Erin, where part of that famous armament "came to grief." Great piles of fantastic sea-worn rock, partly overgrown with greenery, stand, here and there, upon the terrace; and ornamental seats are placed there, for the use of visitors, when the weather is fine. The chimney tops, and thatched roofs of fishermen's cottages, greened over with wind-sown verdure, peep up at the foot

of the slope, which is crowned by the terrace. It is very pleasant to saunter about, there, on a fine summer's day,—or on any other day,—to one who loves nature in all her moods. It is, perhaps, better still to sit down, and look lovingly upon the scene. The witchery of peace is on all around, when the wind is still; the smoke from cottage chimneys rises idly into the pure air,—idle as Ludlam's dog, that leaned against a wall to bark. It rises, here and there, in lazy blue rings,—lounging curls of fat blue smoke, that seem over-fed, and “done up” with pleasant lassitude, as if they had just finished a good dinner; and would rather have a nap before going out. The cottages of the village are picturesquely strewn about, as if they had been dropped through holes in a sack, by somebody who happened to be flying over the place. But they chiefly cluster on the south side at the head of the bay, about the bottom of the hill; not far from high water. They then straggle up the southern hill-side,—like school children out for a holiday,—one on this shelf of green land; another in a nook of the hill; another on the nose of a breezy bit of crag; others, in and out, dotting the sides of the mountain road, which leads through the hamlet of Creag-y-N'eash, in the direction of Spanish Head, and The Chasms,—the most remarkable bit of coast scenery in all the island. About the middle of the scattered village, a whitewashed chapel stands, in a little patch of ground, enclosed by low walls. It stands there, sweet and simple, by the side of the mountain road; about one hundred feet above the head of the tide; and it is a pleasing feature in the scene. The village is all under the eye from the place where I am sitting, and the quiet play of

outdoor life going on there is novel, and dreamy-looking. The whole scene is picturesquely varied. The wild mountain tops, clustered in the direction of Fleshwick, as if in solemn council ; the dark, craggy headlands at the mouth of the bay, with the blue sea heaving between ; the smooth beach, where the clear tide is singing and serging up ; the quiet, wandering village ; and the green plain, rolling away between the hills, in picturesque undulations, landward. Port Erin is enchanted ground ! There are secluded nooks about it, that seem as if

Some congregation of the elves,
To sport by summer moons, had shaped them for themselves.

The village is all under the eye. Down in the lowmost part, where the cottages are nearest to the water, a blue-clad fisherman leans against his door cheek, smoking, and gazing dreamily out to sea. I wonder what the old man is thinking of. In front of another cottage, a stout matron, with browned face and brawny arms, is hanging up strips of conger eel, to dry in the sun ; whilst a little barefooted lass, about five years old, staggers about the doorway, under the weight of a fat baby. A little below the sun-dial, which stands at the end of the green terrace, upon which I am sitting, a knot of Manx fishermen are lounging upon the grass, around a pitcher of the thin Manx ale, called "jough." Now they are very merry, and they laugh and chatter in full chorus, with great glee. Now their mirth subsides ; and they draw around an ancient mariner, who is telling a tale of an adventure he had with the fairies, as he came over the mountain from Fleshwick Bay, one night. It is wonderful how firmly these islanders believe in fairies. Scratch deep

enough into any Manxman, and you will find fairies, dancing by moonlight, amongst a world of other weird imaginations. But we will let the old seaman go on with his story. The village is all under the eye ; and it is such a homely spot, that if one stays a few days there, and is at all disposed to be communicative, one begins to know everybody "by headmark," as the saying is,—"Billy this," and "Johnny that," and "Neddy Omragh;" and the old wanderer from the neighbourhood of Pool Vash, who invariably recites a little epitaph he wrote upon some notable person in that quarter a few years ago ; and who invariably expects something for reciting it. One begins to know the village folk "by headmark," as I have said before, and they stop and salute you kindly, and chat about the weather, the fishing, the crops, and such like ; and there is something very homely and pleasant in feeling one's self thus linked in a kindly way to the rest of the human race wherever they go. . . . The village is all under the eye ; and Port Erin is enchanted ground. The voices of nature are not drowned there in a roar of human tumult. It is true that the unceasing murmur of the tide fills all the air with its wild under-song ; but its influence is so fine and unobtrusive, that every sound of life in the little village comes upon the untroubled sense distinctly framed in the quietude which pervades that dreamy nook of Mona's Isle, when the wind is low. . . . Let us look around, and be silent ; that one may hear what is going on. Behind me is the cheerful hotel, the Falcon's Nest. The landlord stands upon the doorstep, giving directions about the stabling of certain horses which have come up from Castle-

town. The horses are taken round to the stables ; and the landlord goes back into his nest. Snatches of the old man's fairy tales come upon the wind, when it blows, towards me. I hear broken bits of his story, while his mates stand listening around him, in silent wonder :—

“ I was not thinking about nawthin', when I think I hear somethin',—an' I look,—an' there was a little fellow close to my leg. He was dressed in green an' red, with silver buckles on his shooce. He wass about the sice of eight yearce. I make a grab to get howlt of him,—so,—an' then,—I —get a handfull of wind. I cannot see nawthin'. He is gone. . . . I wass wan day makin' a hedge. It was up in Brada. There wass nobody but myself. It wass wonderful ! Up in the air, I hear them, shouting and laughing. I know in a minute it is the fairies. I hear them before, in the same place. They wass hunting. I hear the cap'en o' the fairies. He give a shout,—an' all was silence. Then the noice begin a-gain,—like people in a fair. I hear them so well as I do see my hant. They wass hunting. They have horses, an' dawgs. I hear them very well. The whips wass cracking, an' horns wass blowing,—an' I hear the little dawgs going wif ! wif ! wif ! It wass wonderful ! Then the cap'en give a shout a-gain,—an' all wass silence. Then there wass music. It wass so fine that I cannot hear it. But, I feel there wass music playing up in the air. . . . I know it is the fairies ; and I say, ‘ I think it is time to be going home.’ So, I come a-way. . . . Another time, when I wass coming down from Craig-y-N'eash, it come on dark, all at once,—so dark as pitch. I look at my side. There wass a little fellow. He wass just here (laying his

hand upon his hip). He wass about so big as my leg. I know it wass a fairy. It was not a body at all. He come to stale my boots." And so on. But we let the old man finish his tale. . . . I can now hear the footfall of a lonely traveller, as he stumps along the road behind me, stick in hand. He is a stout, old, weather-beaten Manxman, with gray hair; and he is dressed in coarse blue woollen cloth. I can hear every footfall as he works his way along the silent road towards the mountain side, in the direction of Fleshwick Bay; and, now that I turn round to look at him again, I see that the old man is wiping his forehead, as he stumps along, stick in hand. I can hear women talking at their doors below the slope, and upon the cottage-sprinkled hill-side, in the direction of Creag-y-N'eash. I can hear the prattle of little bare-legged lads, who are sailing their tiny, chip-built ships, and clamorously discussing their relative qualities, as they watch how they fare among the eddies and rapids of the stream which runs down the green crease about the middle of the village. I can hear the cackle of a large family of very clean and very fat ducks, as they waddle and paddle, and splash the water about, and open their wings, and wag their dumpy tails with delight, upon the slushy margin of a pool, where the same streamlet has been dammed up, for their especial pleasure. I can hear the opening and shutting of cottage doors, in different parts of the village; and I can hear something of the wild fringe of an old Manx song, which a fisherman is crooning, as he saunters along the strand towards his boat, which lies, high and dry, in a sheltered nook, under the craggy cliff, at the south side of the bay. I can hear the call of the

Manx shepherd to his dog, upon the dark mountain side, towards Brada Head. Each sound is distinctly framed in the pervading quietness of the scene. At an open bow-window of the hotel behind me, two elderly gentlemen sit talking together, and evidently enjoying what little breeze there is from the sea. I have got it into my head, somehow, that they are men of learning. One of them is a stout, hearty-looking gentleman, who wears a black velvet skullcap; and likes to dine in his own room,—“because he has a good deal of writing to do.” I wonder what he is writing about. He is talking in a sonorous tone of voice, to a dignified old friend of his, whose manners at table, I have noticed, always evince the self-possession, the graceful, quiet action, and kindliness which marks a cultivated gentleman. He is tall and thin; and his noble aquiline nose sustains a pair of gold spectacles. Perhaps the black velvet skullcap and the gold spectacles have something to do with my notion that they are learned men; but I believe I am right, nevertheless. They are talking about the history of the island, and about the geology of this part of it; especially about the mines at Brada Head. I begin to think they have some interest in those Brada mines; for they are talking of the projected breakwater, and the possible future of Port Erin. I can hear them plain enough. Not that I like “eaves-dropping;” but there they sit, at the open window, and they see me; and they evidently don’t care a rap who hears them. . . . At another window, a little farther off, two sunny-haired young ladies come and go, like wandering posies, “freshening and refreshing all the scene” with their sweet presence. They belong to some

well-to-do family of cultivated people, who have come to Port Erin to bathe themselves in quietness, and in the fresh sea-breeze. I am sure it is so, for a noble-looking man, considerably past the noon of life, shows himself at the window, now and then, with two more of these pretty trailers clinging to him. He is dressed in black, and he wears a gold-framed double eye-glass; and his fine countenance is lighted up with a quiet smile, as he paces to and fro, listening to the prattle of the two lovely young women who have hold of him,—body and soul. It is very evident that their prattle is music in his ears. . . . Now the mother comes! I am quite sure that placid, handsome, matronly woman, in the black silk dress, is the mother. She is a well-grown, sweet-looking, sound-constituted dame; round as an apple, and clear skinned, and quietly rosy; and kind hearted, as everybody may see, at the first glance, with half an eye. I durst bet a thousand pounds she is a lady, in heart and thought. She has seen enough of the world to enrich her experience; and without hardening her heart. She is a good, womanly soul; the kindliness of her nature breathes through every pore; and speaks with angelic eloquence in every line and dimple of her face. A few silver threads may be shining in her yet abundant auburn hair, but they only serve to give a new tinge of dignity to her appearance. She knows something of sorrow, too, no doubt; for who can have lived so long in this world of ours as she has lived, without being touched by the divine wand of that noble refiner of the noble heart? But the clouds have long since gone; and her smiles, now, are not smiles "that might as well be tears."

She is, indeed, "one vast substantial smile," from head to foot,—a sunbeam of feminine goodness, raising the atmosphere of happiness around her, wherever she goes. Upon the whole, her lines have evidently "fallen in pleasant places," and, —"So mote it be," say I, "to the end of a long life yet to come." Now she sits down by the open window; and a handsome, light-complexioned lad, about twelve years old, is teasing her in an affectionate way about something or another; whilst a beautiful, sunny-haired girl, of sixteen or so, leans over the other shoulder, and whispers, as she smooths the old lady's hair with tender touches "Mamma, dear, this!" and "Mamma, dear, that!" And, oh, if there be an elysium on earth, that good old soul is in it now! It is a beautiful glimpse of the smooth current of human life.

Now I hear the clatter of horses' feet upon the road behind me, and a car comes up to the door of the hotel, laden with a company of young men, who are evidently "in great spirits." They have, very likely, come across the island from Douglas, making a call or two on the way. If one may measure their enjoyment by the noise they make, they certainly ought to be very happy. They alight and enter the hotel, whilst the car is taken round to the stable yard; and, in a few minutes, I hear a good deal more bell-ringing in the Falcon's Nest.

But who is this strange, gaunt fellow, that comes paddling barefoot up the slope, from the low part of the village, muttering to himself as he gazes vaguely around. It is poor Johnny Daly, the affectionate lunatic youth, who wanders over hill and dale, in all weathers, harmless and happy in

his unconscious helplessness. He is a tall, strong, young man; but quite a child in affectionate simplicity. Poor Johnny! He is only "mad nor-nor-west," after all. If he knows you, he either likes you well, or he doesn't like you at all. If he takes to you, he comes quietly up, and flutters about you like a pet dove with a broken wing; croodling all sorts of inarticulate kindnesses in a touching and not very demonstrative way; except that, now and then, as he listens to your talk,—no matter what you are talking of, nor how badly,—he suddenly claps his hands and laughs boisterously; as if he had just discovered a great joke in the matter. If he likes you, he will sit down upon the grass beside you, quietly crooning some wild fragment of old Manx song, and looking slyly up into your face from time to time; unless he chances to spy the landlord of the hotel, or the owner of the one mansion at Port Erin. If he sees either of these anywhere about, it is a thousand to one that he will immediately leave you to your own devices and desires, for the poor fellow knows who is kind to him a great deal better than some of us do who think that we have all our wits about us. Poor Johnny! He is fond of a penny, like most of the world; and he needs it more than some people do; although He "who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" has scattered a few kind hearts about the wanderer's way that will not see him want for any needful thing. But I have seen people that Johnny would not accept a penny from; and I have many a time wondered at the curious principle of selection which seemed to lurk in some corner of his disordered mind. I remember a little excursion we made, one fine summer's day, over the

mountain on the south side of Port Erin, and among the wild cliffs, near the Sound, which divides the Isle of Man from The Calf. It was a company of six; and amongst them was the landlord of the hotel,—a kind-hearted and intelligent Englishman. Johnny followed him, barefoot, all the rugged way, with the affectionate instinct of a faithful dog. As we returned homeward, by wandering, and sometimes dangerous tracks, along the edge of the precipices, on the south side of the bay,—where the sea roared and dashed majestically among lonely creeks two or three hundred feet below, and the cormorant and seagull wheeled about the dark crags, and screamed with delight in the breeze, half-way down between us and the water,—our host disappeared from the company for a little while, in search of something among the rocks, whilst Johnny was picking his way carefully up the prickly path ahead. Turning round, Johnny missed his friend; and after he had looked for him again and again through the company, and all over the scene, he sat himself down amongst the heather, and gazing quietly at the blue sea, he murmured, in a plaintive tone, “Now, he is gone! He is gone!” . . . In a minute or two, he kneeled down among the heather, and, clasping his hands, like a child at its mother’s knee, he muttered a few broken sentences of the Lord’s prayer, and then he sat down and gazed silently at the sea again. And we could not get him to rise, until his friend reappeared from behind a rock; when he instantly rose and clapped his great brown hands, and trotted after us, with painful steps, through the prickly bush, stopping, now and then, to laugh aloud. . . . Poor Johnny! As he comes paddling up the road from the

village, he hears the voice of the landlord, who is talking to the ostler at the house end ; and away he goes, in full trot, towards his friend, with whom he is a great favourite.

And now, mild evening begins to draw her delicate curtains over the drowsy world. All things below the sky are softening into shade ; and the pensive spell deepens the charm that pervades this sleepy seaside nook of "Mona the lone, where the silver mist gathers." The quiet life of the village is sinking to repose. Barefooted lasses are fetching water from the ancient well of Saint Catherine,—a beautiful spring, at the foot of the sandy slope at the head of the bay ; and an object of great veneration to the inhabitants of the island. Lovers are stealing off to quiet nooks outside the village ; where they can whisper unseen. Boats are coming in from the Sound, and from the blue sea beyond. The fishermen haul them ashore in a sheltered shingly nook, under the craggy southern cliffs ; and then they saunter homeward along the smooth beach, laden with fish and fishing tackle ; some of them singing drowsily, as they saunter along. The murmurs of the sea become more distinct, filling all the air with a slumbrous influence. . . . Now the fisher's wife beats up her cottage fire, sweeps the hearth, and puts the kettle on, to cheer her sea-beaten mate on his return from the wild waters ; and, here and there, fresh smoke is rising again from cottage chimneys ; bluer and more briskly than in the glowing afternoon. . . . The old fisherman and his village companions are mustering upon the grass at the end of the terrace again. He has long since finished the story about his adventure with the fairies among the mountains ; and he has been carousing with his comrades in

the taproom of the Falcon's Nest. They have brought another pitcher of "jough" out with them. And, listen! They are beginning to sing, in chorus, the plaintive old Manx song, called "Molly Charrane!" The strange melody floats up, weird and sweet, blending beautifully with the murmurs of the rising tide, and waking up remembrances of the wild history and wilder legends of "Mona's fairy isle." The broad glare of day is gone. The air is clearer; the green fields look greener; and the hues of the landscape are richer and more distinct than before. The sun has "steeped his glowing axle" in the sea. The gorgeous hues which linger over his track still glow upon the wide waters; but "the line of light that plays along the smooth wave towards the burning west," is slowly retiring in the wake of the sunken sun. Let me look out, while there is yet light, for the eye has glorious scope to roam in, from the place where I am sitting. . . . At the head of the bay,—the scattered village; and the green land,—green all along the slopes of the hills, and all over the fertile undulant plain between, stretching away inland, towards Castletown. It is a pleasant nook of seaside life, at the head of the bay. But, as I look seaward, the flanking headlands grow wilder as they recede, ending in scenes of savage grandeur among the storm-worn crags which front the open sea.

The cliffs and promontories there,
Front to front, and broad and bare,
Each beyond each, with giant feet
Advancing, as in haste to meet.
The shattered fortress, whence the Dane
Blew his loud blast, and rushed in vain
Tyrant of the drear domain.

Those grim sentinels have seen strange scenes of storm, and battle, and shipwreck, during their long watch over the entrance to Port Erin. Oft has the ancient Dane steered his "nailed bark," laden with sea-robbers, into that little bay; and he has oft been wrecked upon that craggy coast. Spanish Head overfrowned the destruction of part of the great Armada. Many a noble ship has gone down in the sound between the Island and the Calf of Man. . . . As twilight deepens down, the breeze freshens, and the blue waves begin to heave with life. Great white-winged ships glide majestically by,—some near, some far off; and some almost lost to sight in the distance. Far away, in the west, the outlines of the mountains of Morne and Wicklow are fading away from view. It is a bewitching hour! It is a bewitching scene! But now the Irish mountains have disappeared in the shade; and the distant sea grows dim to the eye. The village around me is sinking to rest; and candle-lights begin to glimmer through cottage windows. The old fisherman and his companions have gone back into the taproom of the Falcon's Nest. The wind is rising still; and the air grows cold. I, too, will retire until the world has donned its night-dress; and so good-by to this fairy scene for a while. The moon rises at ten! Perhaps I may come forth to look around me once more, when the world lies sleeping beneath her quiet smile. If not, then farewell to thee, Port Erin!

When scenes less beautiful attract my gaze,
I shall recall thy quiet loveliness;
When harsher tones are round me, I shall dream
Of those mysterious notes, whose thrilling sounds
Peopled the solitude.



The Complaint of a Sad Complaint.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'WEEKLY GROWL.'

SIR,—I am a nuisance, and therefore I suppose it is right, in the abstract, that I should be put down. Unfortunately, however, many of the persons and things by which I am surrounded are the same to me, and I feel, by fits, vastly inclined to extinguish them, although I know full well, in my sane moments, that they are generally useful. And so it is, right to the end of the piece; everything and everybody is, by turns, a nuisance to everybody and everything else; and if there were no restraint upon the public vanity, and private pique, and officious frivolities which affect these conflicting elements, the whole body politic, being composed of nuisances, would be destroyed, like the Irish cats in the story. In fact, sir, there is nobody in the world that is not a nuisance to somebody; though that is hardly a sufficient reason why they should be allowed to worry one another. But in these days, the art and mystery of grumbling,—that native prerogative which has grown up so luxuriantly in the soil of our English freedom, that the grumblers now constitute an eminently valuable power in the state,—the art and mystery of grumbling (it really is artful and mysterious sometimes) is now growing

into a kind of social scurvy, more annoying than serviceable, and sometimes exceeding in offensiveness the nuisances which it scratches into notice. The contagion is getting to such a pitch just now, that it is time for the nuisances to speak for themselves,—for even a nuisance has a right side,—and although I myself am one, I shall be grateful if you will allow me,—just this once,—to say a few words respecting the treatment to which many of my humbler brethren are subjected by the magnates of the tribe. I feel the more hopeful that you will grant this, since I know that I am not the only nuisance to which you have, with admirable forbearance, opened the columns of your excellent journal.

Happily, the expression of opinion is so free in this country, that,—although some offensive persons deny that a nuisance has the slightest right to appeal to *any* of the senses,—I will venture to assert, backed by all known law and custom, that even a nuisance has a right to be *heard*,—at least, *in its own defence*; thanks to that instinctive leaning to fair play which, while it deprecates anything that is foul, yet acknowledges that even foulness itself may, sometimes, have a fair side. My dear sir, we nuisances have endured so much, as we may say, from those of our own household, that the patience of the most Christian nuisance in the world must give way under such an incessant fire of impertinent insult. Ah me! there seems to be so little fellow-feeling amongst nuisances now-a-days, that it may be worth while to remind them all of the poet's little sermon beginning,—

O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us.

Nuisance-hunters are always, of course, a nuisance to the

nuisances ; but the hunters are so often worse, upon the whole, than the hunted, that it would be a general benefit to hold up the mirror to these inconsiderate grumblers a little now and then. To whom, then, in this difficulty, can we appeal, but to you, oh Mr. Editor ? who are yourself a very rock of offence to some misguided persons, who are, doubtless, a stumbling-block to you.

How the theme widens as one pursues it. There is something comical about the pathology of public grumbling. Is it not a fact well known to you, my dear sir, that there exists an inexhaustible class of persons who, having little or no capacity for distinguishing themselves publicly in any nobler fashion, and fearing, above all things, that obscurity which is their natural destiny, are constantly racking their wits for something to write to the papers about. How many such have you, yourself, sir, out of the sheer kindness of your nature,—not unmixed with a certain sense of the humour of the thing,—lent a little fame to, by deigning, occasionally, to embalm their crude frivolities in your own clear “nonpareil.” To such persons, anything will serve for a subject, if they can only twist it into the shape of a complaint : strong smells, and strange smells, which are not strong ; suspicious loiterers in lonely places ; gaslight when the moon shines, and want of gas when a cloud happens to be passing over the moon ; flying chips from masons’ chisels, which have been stopped in their flight by the rubicund tip of some respectable gentleman’s nose ; bits of orange peel on the flags ; public clocks that are too fast, or too slow, or are stopt altogether, or have their fingers bent, or the faces of which are partly hidden by the encroaching insignia of

ambitious pawnbrokers, or are in places where they are not needed, or *are not* in places where they *are* needed ; pavements which are too slippery for horses, and too rough for ladies ; music to people who have no ear for it, and noises to people who have a delicate ear for music, and either to people who like neither ; mutually-discordant neighbours ; church bells that are not rung, and church bells that are rung too much, and church bells that are not melodious when they are rung ; holes in the street, and places where holes are likely to be, sometimes ; too much water, and too little water ; cockle shells ; broken pots ; the smell of dinners floating up from hotel kitchens ; and the inarticulate wails of chip-sellers and fish women ; want of loyalty to the crown ; want of loyalty to the people ; the insolence of cabmen, and railway buffers ; sneezing during service-time ; fast-days, proposed by people who are ill with feasting, and feast-days, proposed by people who are ill with fasting ; general holidays, proposed by those who are paid for their holidays, and objected to by those who are not paid for them ; and a thousand other things, more insignificant even than these ; sometimes ferreted out by ingenious old fogies, of an irritable disposition, who go tooting about the streets, "finding things out," or by young "green" persons, driven to their wits' end by a kind of literary measles. Heaven knows, I do not wish to "freeze the genial current" of such poor souls as these latter, but then, Mr. Editor, we must draw the line somewhere. With respect to the former, have I not seen such a self-elected old nuisance inspector, going slowly along the street, groping with his sharp proboscis for something in the morning air to grumble about in

graceful prose, and meeting with a smell which he did not quite understand,—a smell which perhaps had travelled “ever so far” before it met him, and was on its way into the country, there to die peaceably upon the general air, if he had only allowed it to go,—he straightway halts, he sniffs at it carefully,—he affiliates it upon something convenient,—he looks grave,—he whips out a pocket-book, and makes a note, to be wrought into an epistolary complaint at leisure, in the fervent hope of its appearing among Saturday’s correspondence. Have I not known persons, whose jangled senses, refusing the Lethean balm of sleep, have lain awake o’ nights, listening indignantly to the weird howls of libidinous cats, prowling about the back yards, and the rigging of the house, and making the sleepless midnight doubly hideous with their “shrill ill will,”—who have started up irritably from their pillow at last, and, striking a match, have exclaimed, “Drat that cat ! Why don’t the police look after these things ? I will write to the papers.” In fact, sir, the extravaganzas of public complaint are endless in variety, and, not unfrequently, very unreasonable.

I know a manufactory of a certain kind, which was established many years ago, in a spot as remote as was convenient, and wholly uninhabited for some distance around, in the hope of being free from the charge of anything in the shape of nuisance ; but, as years rolled on, population gathered about it, and grumbling began, which, by irregular fits, has been carried on ever since ; and, whenever the complaint could manage to get a “respectable start,” it was sure to be well followed up ; without thought, as such cries often are. Even in the papers of the last few

days, letter after letter has appeared, complaining of the effluvia arising from certain alum works in Salford. Some of these letters are written by gentlemen whose delicate nasal discrimination amounts to a marvel, if not to a miracle, when we remember the distance they live from the spot complained of. How on earth any smell, such as the one alluded to by these gentlemen, can manage to travel two mortal miles, in a high wind, working its passage through a hundred other smokes and smells as it goes, and still preserve its own individuality, surpasses me to know. But so it is. Up to Kersall Moor, and other green nooks of nestling, miles off, where the human nose is critical, this compact nuisance cleaves its way through the murky air, keeping wonderfully free from communion with the elements it passes through, and strikes the senses at that distance as distinctly as if it were a flat-iron. It seems to hold itself in till it has found out noses which can appreciate it, and then it "comes out strong," evidently making an effort to reveal all the pent-up pungency of its nature, in the hope of gaining a little respectable distinction. It is an aristocratic smell, too. It likes good society, and will associate with none but gentlemanly noses. It has to travel for it, though; for, like the prophets, it is not honoured with any remarkable notice in its own neighbourhood. Now, noses such as these, are "something like," as the saying is; and, but for such noses, how on earth should we, who live amongst it, be able to discriminate one smell from another in the complication of odours which crowd the air of this busy district,—except in such cases as the town's manure yard, which overpowers everything else for a mile around with its

intolerable native strength,—is strong enough, indeed, in the height of summer, “for a man to hang his hat upon,” as the Irish say. That, now, is a smell really worth notice, if it were only possible to get an alderman or two to speak about it.

When it happens to be fashionable to raise an outcry against any particular manufacture, as in the case of these unfortunate alum works, what is that manufacturer to do? Is he to take up his works and walk, from one locality to another, every time an inconsiderate complaint happens to be made against him. Is he to become a kind of nomadic outcast? Is he to betake himself to utter solitude, and go from one “desert where no men abide” to another “desert where no men abide,”—a manufacturing voice, crying for orders in the wilderness, and finding none,—until his occupation becomes unprofitable to himself or anybody else.

And then, the tone in which complaint after complaint has been uttered, in the case of these works in Salford, is rather curious. “*The Nuisance in Pendleton!*” That is the title of more than one letter on the subject!. “*The Nuisance in Pendleton!*” Good heavens! Who art thou, O man, that writeth thus? Oh, happy Pendleton, with *one* nuisance! Go thy ways, and break forth into singing, thou pleasant, and, in some places, rather green suburb,—break forth into singing, even from Windsor Bridge right away up Eccles Old Road, and in every other direction, to the utmost extent of thy remarkable borders,—break forth into singing! Thou with the long pole standing near the church, and the cock upon the top of it—rejoice, and give thanks,

for thy extraordinary exemption from the common troubles of this manufacturing locality! And well might Pendleton sing, if this were true; but who does not know how many things which are really useful and necessary, are not always pleasant to those who have no immediate interest in them? Who does not know that if everything which is a nuisance to somebody or another, at one time or another, were removed from society, there would be hardly anything useful left in society at all,—and if all the nuisances in society were to cry out in this way, at once, against each other, who knows where it would end? They would cleave the general ear with horrid grumbling. Really, gentlemen who get their living by the necessary infliction of unpleasant noises, and smokes, and steams, and smells, upon people who are forced to live among them because they live, in a certain sense, by them, should be a little more considerate. They should, at least, remember that, although they can leave the town, and live in palatial houses, situated in pleasant spots, “far removed from noise and smoke,” where the air is so beautifully different that it makes them a little particular, they leave their own share of the nuisances of the town behind them, to be patiently endured by an immense multitude of people who cannot escape from them,—if they wish to live,—and who, although they are just the people who suffer most from them, are, also, just the people who would be the least heeded if they were to cry out against them.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

A SAD COMPLAINT.



Oliver Fernleaf's Watch.

Oh thou who dost these pointers see,
That show the passing hour ;
Say,—do I tell the time to thee,
And tell thee nothing more ?
I bid thee mark life's little day
With strokes of duty done ;
A clock may stop at any time,—
But time will travel on.

THE CHURCH CLOCK.

WHEN I was first bound apprentice, I was so thick-set, and of such short stature for my age, that I began to be afraid that I was doomed to be a pigmy in size ; and it grieved my heart to think of it. I remember how anxiously I use to compare my own stunted figure with the height of other lads younger than me ; and seeing myself left so much below them, I remember how much I longed for a rise in the world. This feeling troubled me sorely for two or three years. It troubled me so much, indeed, that, even at church, when I heard the words, “Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?” the question touched me with

the pain of a personal allusion to my own defect ; and, in those days, I have many a time walked away from service on a Sunday, sighing within myself, and wondering how much a cubit was. But I had a great deal of strong life in my little body ; and, as I grew older, I took very heartily to out-door exercises, and I carefully notched the progress of my growth, with a pocket-knife, against a wooden partition, in the office where I was an apprentice. As time went on, my heart became gradually relieved and gay as I saw these notches rise steadily, one over the other, out of the low estate which had given me so much pain. But, as this childish trouble died away from my mind, other ambitions awoke within me, and I began to fret at the tether of my apprenticeship, and wish for the time when I should be five feet eight, and free. Burns's songs were always a delight to me ; but there was one of them which I thought more of then than I do now. It was,—

Oh for ane-an'-twenty, Tam !
An', hey for ane-an'-twenty, Tam !
I'd learn my kin a rattlin' sang,
An' I saw ane-an'-twenty, Tam !

About two years before the wished-for day of my release came, I mounted a long-tailed coat, and a chimney-pot hat, and began to reckon myself among the sons of men. My whiskers, too,—they never came to anything grand,—never will,—but my whiskers began to show a light-coloured down, that pleased the young manikin very much. I was anxious to coax that silken fluz lower down upon my smooth cheeks ; but it was no use. They never grew strong ; and they would not come low down ; so I gave them up at last, with many a sigh. The dainty ariels were timid, and did

their sprouting gently. This was one of my first lessons in resignation. I remember, too, it was about the same time that I bought my first watch. It was a second-hand silver verge watch, with large old-fashioned numerals upon the face ; and it cost twenty-one shillings. I had a good deal ado to raise the price of it by small savings, by working over-hours, and by the sale of an old accordeon, and a sword-stick. Long before I could purchase it, I had looked at it from time to time as I passed by the watchmaker's window ; which was on the way between my home and the shop where I was an apprentice. At last I bore the prize away. A few pence bought a steel chain ; and my eldest sister gave me an old seal, and a lucky sixpence, to wear upon the chain,—and I felt for the time as if it was getting twelve o'clock with my fortunes. A long-tailed coat ; a chimney-pot hat ; a watch ; a mild promise of whiskers ; a good constitution ; and a fair chance of being five feet eight or so. No wonder that I began to push out my shins as I went about the streets. For some weeks after I became possessed of my watch, I took great pleasure in polishing the case, looking into the works, winding it up, and setting it right by public clocks, and by other people's watches. I had a trick, too, of pulling it out in public places, which commanded the range of some desired observation. But after a year or so the novelty wore off, and I began to take less interest in the thing. Besides, through carelessness and inexperienced handling, I found that my watch began to swallow up a great deal of pocket-money, in new glasses, and other repairs. I was fond of jumping, too, and other rough exercises ; and through this my watch got sadly knocked

about, and was a continual source of anxiety to me. At last I got rid of it altogether. It had never gone well with me ; but it went from me,—for good ; and I was cured of the watch mania for a long while. In fact, nearly twenty years passed away, during which I never owned a watch ; never, indeed, very much felt the want of one. When I look back at those years, and remember how I managed to mark the time without watch of my own, I find something instructive in the retrospect. In a large town there are so many public clocks, and bells, and so many varied movements of public life which are governed by the progress of the hours, that there is little difficulty in the matter. But in the country,—in my lonely rambles,—I learned, then, to read the march of time, “indifferently well,” in the indications of nature, as ploughmen and shepherds do. The sights, and “shapes and sounds and shifting elements,” became my time-markers ; and the whole world was my clock. I can see many compensations arising from the lack of a watch with me during that time.

And now, after so many years of sweet independence in this respect, I find myself, unexpectedly, the owner of a watch once more. I became possessed of it rather curiously, too. The way of it was this. I was on a visit to a neighbouring town ; and, in the afternoon, I called to pass an hour with an old friend, before returning home. After the usual hearty salutes, we sat down in a snug back parlour, lighted our pipes, and settled into a dreamy state of repose, which was more delightful than any strained effort at entertainment. We puffed away silently for a while ; and then we asked one another questions, in a drowsy way, like men talking in their

sleep ; then we smoked on again, and looked vacantly round about the room, and into the fire. At last, I noticed that my friend began to gaze earnestly at my clothing ; and, knowing him to be a close observer, and a man of penetrative spirit, I felt it ; though I knew very well that it was all right, for he takes a kindly interest in all I wear, or do, or say. Well, he began to look hard at my clothing, beginning with my boots. I didn't care much about him examining my boots ; for, as it happened, they had just been soled, and heeled, and welted afresh ; with a brand new patch upon one side. If he had seen them a week before, I should have been pained, for they were in a ruinous state then ; and, being rather a dandified pair originally, they looked abominable. I think there is nothing in the world so intensely wretched in outward appearance as shabby dandyism. Well ; he began with my boots ; and, after he had scrutinised them thoroughly for a minute or two, I felt instinctively, that he was going to peruse the whole of my garments from head to foot, like a tapestried story. And so it was. When he had finished my boots, his eyes began to travel slowly up my legs ; and, as they did so, my mind ran anxiously ahead, to see what the state of things was upon the road that his glance was coming. "How are my trousers?" thought I. There was no time to lose ; for I felt his eye coming up my leg, like a dissecting knife. At last, I bethought me that I had split my trousers across one knee, about a fortnight before ; and the split had only been indifferently stitched up. "Now for it," thought I, giving myself a sudden twitch, with the intention of throwing my other leg over that knee to hide the split. But I was too

late. His eye had already fastened upon the place like a leech. I saw his keen glance playing slyly about the split, and my nerves quivered in throes of silent pain all the while. At last, he lifted up his eyes, and sighed, and then, looking up at the ceiling, he sighed out the word, "Aye," very slowly; and then he turned aside to light his pipe at the fire again; and, whilst he was lighting his pipe, I very quietly laid the sound leg of my trousers over the split knee. Pushing the tobacco into his pipe with the haft of an old penknife, he now asked me how things were going on in town. I pretended to be quite at ease; and I tried to answer him with the air of one who was above the necessity of such considerations. But I knew that he had only asked the question for the purpose of throwing me off my guard; and I felt sure that his eyes would return to the spot where they had left off at. And they did so. But he saw at once that the knee was gone; so he travelled slowly upwards, with persistent gaze. In two or three minutes he stopped again; it was somewhere about the third button of my waistcoat,—or rather the third button-hole, for the button was off. He halted there; and his glance seemed to snuff round about the place, like a dog that thinks it has caught the scent; and I began to feel uncomfortable again; for, independent of the button being off, I had only twopence-halfpenny, and a bit of blacklead pencil, and an unpaid bill in my pocket; and somehow I thought he was finding it all out. So I shifted a little round, and began to hum within myself,—

Take, oh take those eyes away!

But it was no use. He would do it. And I couldn't stand

it any longer ; so I determined to bolt before he got up to my shirt front, or " dickey,"—for I had a " dickey" on, and one side of it was bulging out in a disorderly way, and I durst not try to put it right for fear of drawing his attention to it. I determined to be rid of the infliction at once, so I pretended to be in a hurry. Knocking the ashes out of my pipe, I rose up and said, " Have you got a time-table ?"

" Yes."

" There's a train about now, I think."

" Yes ; but stop till the next. What's your hurry ? You're not here every day. Sit down and get another pipe."

" How's your clock ?" said I, turning round and looking through the window, so as to get a sly chance of pushing my " dickey" into its place. " How's your clock ?"

" Well, it's about ten minutes fast. Isn't it, Sarah ?" said he to the servant, who was coming in with some coals.

" No," replied she. " I put it right by th' blacksmith, this mornin'."

By " the blacksmith," she meant the figure of an old man with a hammer, which struck the hours upon the bell of a public clock, a little higher up the street.

" Well," said my friend, looking at the time-table, " in any case, you're too late for this train now. Sit down a bit. I left my watch this morning, to have a new spring put in it ; but I'll keep my eye on the clock, so that you shall be in time for the next. Sit you down, an' let's have a chat about old times."

I gave a furtive glance at my " dickey," and seeing it was all right, I sat down again with a sigh, laying the sound leg

of my trousers carefully over my split knee. I had no sooner sat down, than he looked at my waistcoat pocket again, and said, "I say, old boy, why don't you carry a watch? It would be a great convenience."

I explained to him that I had been so many years used to notice public clocks, and to marking the time by the action of nature, and by those movements of human life that are regulated by clock work, that I felt very little need for a watch. Besides, it was as easy to ask the time of day of people who had watches, as it would be to look at one's own; and then, if I had a watch, I did not know whether the convenience of the thing would compensate for the anxiety and expense of it. He listened attentively, and then, after looking into the fire musingly for a minute or two, as if he was interpreting my excuse in some way of his own, he suddenly knocked his pipe upon the top bar of the fire-grate, and said, "By Jupiter Ammon, I'll give you one!" My friend never swears, except by that dissolute old Greek; or by a still more mysterious deity, whom he calls "the Living Jingo!" Whenever he mentions either of these, I know that he means something strong; so I sat still and "watched the case," as lawyers say.

"Mary," said he, rising, and calling to his wife, who was in another room; "Mary, wheer's that old watch?"

"I have it upstairs, in an old rosewood writing desk," replied she.

"Just fetch it down; I want to look at it." He listened at the door, until he heard her footsteps going upstairs; and then he turned to me, chuckling and rubbing his hands; and, slapping me on the shoulder, he said, "Now then, old

fellow, fill your pipe again! By the Living Jingo, you shall have the time o' day in your pocket before you leave this house." She was a good while in returning; so he shouted up the stairs, "Haven't you found it yet, Mary?"

"Yes," replied she, "it's here. I'll be down in a minute."

I began to puff very hard at my pipe; for I was getting excited. She came at last, and said, as she laid the watch in his hand, "I have thought of selling it many a time, for it is of no use lying yonder."

"Aye," replied my friend, pretending to look very hard at the works. As long as she remained in the room, he still kept quietly saying, "Aye, aye," at short intervals. But when she left the room, he earnestly watched the closing door, and then, shutting the watch, he came across to me, and, laying it in my hand, he said, "There, old boy, that's yours. Keep it out of sight till you get out of the house." And I did keep it out of sight. But I was more than ever anxious to get away by the next train, so that I could fondle it freely. It was an old silver lever watch, without fingers. It was silent, with a silence that had continued long; its face was dusty; and the case wore the cloudy hue of neglect. However, I bore my prize away at last; and, before the day was over, I had spent eighteenpence upon new fingers, and sixpence upon a yard-and-a-half of broad black watered silk ribbon for a guard. Next day, after I had polished the case thoroughly with whitening, I put on a clean shepherd's plaid waistcoat, in order to show the broad black ribbon which led to my watch. Since then, I know not how oft I have stopped to put it right by the cathedral clock; and I have found sometimes, as the Irishman did,

that "the little divul had bate that big fellow by two hours in twelve." It is a curious thing, this old watch of mine ; and I like it : there is something so human about it. It is full of

Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles.

Sometimes the fingers stand still, even when the works are going on. Even when wound up, it has a strange trick of stopping altogether for an hour or two now and then, as if smitten with a fit of idleness ; and then it will set off again of its own accord, like a living thing wakening up from sleep. It stops oftener than it goes. It is not so much a time-keeper as a standing joke ; and looking at it from this point of view, I am very fond of this watch of mine. Before I had it, whenever I chanced to wake in the night time, I used to strike a light, and read myself to sleep again. But now, when I waken in the night, I suddenly remember, "Oh, my watch !" Then I listen, and say to myself, "I believe it has stopped again !" and then, listening more attentively, and hearing its little pulse beating, I say, "No : there it goes. Bravo !" And I strike a light, and caress the little thing ; and wind it up. I have great fun with it, in a quiet way. I believe, somehow, that it is getting used to me ; and I shouldn't like to part with it any more. There is a kind of friendship growing between us that will last until my own pulse is stopped by the finger of death. And what is death, after all, but the stopping of life's watch ; to be wound up again by the Maker ? I should not like to lose this old watch of mine now. It is company when I am lonely ; it is diversion when I am tired ; and, though it is erratic, it is amiable and undemonstrative. I will make it famous yet,

in sermon or in song. I have begun once or twice, "Oh thou! ——" and then stopped, and tried, "When I behold ——" and then I have stopped again. But I will do it yet. If the little thing had a soul, now, I fear that it would never be saved; for, "faith without works is vain." But I have faith in it, though it has deceived me oft. My quaint old monitor! How often has it warned me, that when man goes "on tick," it always ends in a kind of "Tic douloureux." But the hour approaches, when its tiny pulse and mine must both stand still; for

Owd Time,—he's a troublesome codger,—
Keeps nudgin' us on to decay,
An' whispers, you're nobbut a lodger;
Get ready for goin' away.

And when "life's fitful fever" is past, I hope they will not sell my body to the doctors; nor my watch to anybody; but bury us together; and let us rest when they have done so.





The Month of May.

Come, my Corinna, come ; let's go a-Maying.

HERRICK.

STUFFED with cold, and muffled to the chin, I stood shivering in the market place, with my hands in my pockets, when I heard somebody behind me coughing and saying in husky tones, that the merry month of May had come at last. I looked round. The speaker's nose was red and raw, and his body seemed to have retreated as far as possible within the ample folds of a wintry gaberdine. The person addressed, after coughing a little sarcastic prelude, replied, with a kind of cowardly complacency, "Yes, the merry month of May has come at last." And then the two hypocrites shook hands, like frozen pumps, with icicles depending from their spouts ; and, after shrugging their shoulders and agreeing that it was bitter cold, they took their departure, like a pair of Esquimaux on their way to a blubber-soirée. The sky was overcast with gloom, and a marrow-freezing wind fluttered the garments of the passers-by. If Herrick had started from Man-

chester with his Corinna to go a-Maying this season, they would probably have gone well wrapped up, in a cab, furnished with a foot-warmer; and, after two hours' shivery ramble among the bleak lanes of Higher Broughton, in fruitless search of thorn-blossom, they would have returned home by the first available 'bus, to be laid up for a fortnight with influenza. But I don't think Corinna would have gone, if she had lived in Manchester, nor Herrick either,—unless he had gone for the sake of a stroll with Corinna,—for the genial old minstrel had a sweet tooth in his head for female society. And so "the merry month of May has come at last," said I, gazing around. To a rheumatic mind, linked with a body in which the limited allowance of caloric was fast declining, and considerably embittered by a ceaseless pursuit of warmth under difficulties, there seemed to be a touch of irony in the news. And yet I found that it was true,—at least, in the almanac. Is it the almanac or the season that is out of joint? Not the almanac, certainly; for almanacs now-a-days are rarely answerable for anything but the date, and a few passing notices chiefly connected with biography and church festivals. They rarely meddle with the weather now, except in a general way, and upon safe premises. Zadkiel and "Old Moore" have the prophetic business almost entirely to themselves. The days are gone when old women inquired at the bookseller's for almanacs with as little thunder and lightning in them as possible. But our notions of what May ought to be are considerably influenced by the remembrance of youth's glowing dream,—youth that, out of a handful of half-grown salad, could make a whole summer of fruits and flowers, and

thick-leaved groves, whose sylvan rooflets ring with "blending lyrics, poured from every tree." Youth, and the rosy reports of May in sunnier climes,—these have helped us to nail down extravagant expectations upon a date that represents, as far as our later experience goes, a very notable uncertainty. In May,—“when the red blood reigns in the winter’s pale,”—we old fogies have to keep the weather-eye open. May is the meeting of the year’s night and morning,—the skirmishing ground, the debatable land of the two seasons; now flushed with the rosy scouts of advancing summer,—now raided by the ruffian rear-guard of retreating winter. What the poets have written about May is pleasant enough, and sometimes very beautiful,—beautiful as the poet’s dream. Most of these things, however, have been written of more genial parts of the land than ours. For the most part they seem to write from some bright little isle of their own,

Where a leaf never dies from the still-blooming bowers,
And the bee banquets on, through a whole year of flowers.

In a May such as this, it is pleasant enough to pore over these rosy dreams at a warm fireside. But now and then we find a bold Parnassian, who, dipping his pen by accident into fact, leaks out the raw truth about the matter, like George Herbert in his allusion to “snow in May:”—

Grief melts away,
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Thomson, too, in spite all his “ethereal mildness,” has a

few lines which show that he was well acquainted with the fickle nature of our English spring :—

As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
And winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids its driving sleets
Deform the day delightless ; so that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill engulphed,
To shake the sounding marsh ; or, from the shore,
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the list'ning waste.

Curiously enough, one wintry day, at the beginning of the present month, I received two letters ; one from the pleasantest part of the lake district, glowingly-descriptive of the charms of the season, and headed by Burns's lines,—

The small birds rejoice in the green fields returning ;
The murmuring streamlet winds clear through the dale ;
The hawthorn-trees blow in the dew of the morning ,
And sweetly the cowslip bedecks the green vale ;

the other was from a friend in the city, warning me to “beware of the present treacherous weather.” Accepting the latter hint, I wrapped my old cloak about me, and betook myself to the ingle-cheek, where I could sit, gazing into the fire, and find all summer there, till the trembling year, outside, was more confirmed.

And yet, in spite of the lingering chills of winter, a cheerful whisper seems to be running through earth and air that the season of fruits and flowers is approaching. The cold wind seems to know that it has not long to stay, and must get ready to bundle and go northward for a while. “The nesh young cowslip,” the timid leaflets, and peeping buds, seem

hopefully emboldened by confidence in a genial change ; and even in the clouded sky there is something of a pathetically-pleasing tone, as if it had heard of tepid airs, tender showers, and the world-reviving sun, whose force, "deep-darting to the dark retreat of vegetation," tempers all into the perfect year. A spirit of beauty and bloom is creeping over the year's contrarities, and the old bounty is dawning upon us once more. The sweetness of the suburbs is gushing into the city. Posied button-holes are beginning to wander about the streets again. From the green country, heavy-laden carts are trailing in with the fresh growth of spring, and with country lads, lounging by the horses' heads, singing old May songs. The market place is redolent of goodly smells ; for the herald flowers of the year are leaving the mother-root,

Where they, together,
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, kept house, unknown.

No wonder that all nations of the earth have hailed the return of spring with a kind of religious joy.

Doubtless our May-day celebrations have their origin in that ancient fire-worship which is traceable, through all ages, up to the earliest records of mankind. On May-day, the British Druids "lighted two goodly fires upon their sacred hills, and, with great incantations upon them, they used to bring the cattle between them against the diseases of the year." Down to a recent period, these fires were lighted, and May-games celebrated, both in Ireland and Scotland ; and even at this day, in remote districts all over the kingdom, some relics of the Druidic fire-worship on May

morning linger among the peasantry. It is curious to note how these old customs have been handed down from age to age, turning a corner now and then, and re-appearing again, in altered guise, to suit the changes of the times, yet retaining enough of their ancient feature to mark their origin. The Greeks and Romans have their grand May-day festivities in honour of the goddess Flora ; and it was the custom in Italy, as it was here, in later times, for the youths of both sexes to sally forth to the woods on May-morning to gather flowers and bloomy boughs, returning about sunrise to deck their doors and windows with garlands, and to dance around the May-pole, which stood in the centre of the village during the remainder of the year. No wonder that northern nations, after their long winter, should welcome the return of spring with festal dance and song. Stowe, in his "Survey of London," says that on May-morning, "Every man, except impediment, would walk into the sweet meddowes and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds, praising God after their kind." He says, also, that "in the month of May the citizens of London, of all estates, had several Mayings, and did fetch in May-poles, with divers warlike shouts, with good archers, morrice dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long ; and towards the evening they had stage-plays, and bonfires in the streets." Sometimes the May-pole was brought in with great pomp, drawn by twenty, or even forty yoke of oxen, their horns garlanded with flowers. And when the pole, decked with branches, garlands, and streamers, was reared up, with musical riot and shouting, arbours

and bowers were formed beneath it, and the ground was strewn with flowers; and then, says Stubbs, who wrote in the reign of Elizabeth, "they fell to banquet and feast, to leape and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idolles, *whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather, the thing itself.*" Stubbs was a well-known Puritan writer. The Long Parliament took the May-poles down in 1644, but the Restoration set them up again soon after. Strutt says, in his "Sports and Pastimes," published in 1801:—"The Mayings are in some sort yet kept up by the milkmaids at London, who go about the streets with their garlands and music, dancing." And it is even so with us, here, to this day, as witness the grand procession of waggons and luries, drawn by handsome horses, bedecked with ribbons and green branches, which passed through the main streets of the city on the first day of the month, when every milk horse that came into town, and every costermonger's donkey, had a tuft of green or a bunch of ribbons nodding at its bridle. Deep-bedded in the heart of man is the joy which hails the return of nature's bounty after the cold winter has passed away.

And now I will conclude with a glance at the old May customs of our own neighbourhood. Two centuries ago, before cotton manufacture was dreamt of, and when Lancashire was a comparatively roadless and untempting wild, poor in soil, half moss, and forest, and lofty moorland, and inhabited by a hardy primitive race, holding less communion with the outside world than almost any other part of the kingdom, the ancient festivals of the year were kept up there with religious care. And, in spite of the tremendous

rush of change which manufacture and modern science have brought, the native population cling to the customs of their fore-elders still, with great tenacity, especially in the hilly parts of the country. Lancashire has many a tall May-pole standing yet. "Orrell Pow," near Wigan, takes its name from the lofty May-pole, still erect, at the four lane ends, which once was the centre of the ancient village. Even in the immediate neighbourhood of Manchester, there are two, dividing the air with the lofty chimneys around them. For threepence the traveller may ride from the Exchange to the heart of the village of Failsworth, where the famous "Failsworth Pow" shoots its tall spike into the sky. And a twopenny ride by omnibus will bring him within a few yards of the spot where the cock on the top of the Pendleton May-pole looks round in silent astonishment upon the forest of brick which occupies the once green land around. "Pendleton Pow" is of much higher date than the Reformation; for in the will of Thomas del Bothe, who died 47th Edward Third (1373), the sum of thirty shillings is bequeathed towards making the causeway at Pendleton, near "le Poll." The villagers of ancient Pendleton used to erect their May-pole on May morning, and decorate it with green boughs and garlands, brought from "the forest of Blakeley." In 1780, the township was little more than a fold of cottages, with its May-pole and green. The pole stands, now, in the midst of a vast growth of modern change, a solitary relic of the olden time. In "Lancashire Folk Lore," edited by the late John Harland, and T. T. Wilkinson, of Burnley, I find the following notice of an old Lancashire May-pole:—"The May-pole of Lostock, a village near Bolton, is probably the

most ancient upon record. It is mentioned in a charter by which the town of Westhalchton (? Westhaughton) was granted to the abbey of Cockersand, about the reign of King John. The pole, it appears, had superseded a cross, and formed one of the landmarks which defined the boundaries; and it must therefore have been a permanent and not an annual erection. The charter says:—‘De Lostock meypull, ubi crux situ fuit, recta linea in austro usque ad crucem super le Tunga.’ (From Lostock May-pole, where the cross was formerly, in a straight line to the south, as far as the cross upon Tunga.)” It was formerly a custom, both in Cheshire and Lancashire, for young men to place birchen boughs, on May-day, over the doors of their mistresses, and mark the residence of a scold by an alder bough. There is an old rhyme which associates peculiar boughs with peculiar tempers,—as an owler for a scolder, a nut for a slut, &c. The evening before May-day is known among many of the towns of Lancashire by the name of “Mischief Neet,” when all kinds of mad pranks are played. In the township of Spotland, in the parish of Rochdale, the young people of the neighbourhood assemble on the top of Knoll Hill, on the first Sunday in May, to welcome the arrival of spring, with mutual congratulations. On May morning, many an emblematic bough ornaments the chimney-tops of the villages and towns of the Fylde. In the Fylde country, the sports and dances of May-day were kept up with spirit, around the May-poles.

And all the lusty youngers, in a rout,
With merry lasses danced the rod about.

In the old coach times, the first of May was a great day

in Manchester. The coaches were new painted, and the teams provided with new harness for the occasion. The coachmen and guards had new uniforms. The driver wore a cockade of ribbons and a great bouquet of flowers; and the guard, in bright scarlet uniform, played blithely upon his Kent bugle; and the horses' heads were decorated with nosegays. The luries, waggons, drays, and milk-carts, too, made a great display, as they did on the first of the present month. Lancashire and Cheshire are peculiarly rich in old May songs. It was, and in some villages near Manchester is still, the custom for a party of minstrels to go from house to house, about the end of April, singing songs of rejoicing that "cold winter is driven away," and the season is "drawing near unto the merry month of May." These are a few scattered relics of the many ancient May customs still lingering amongst us. And now let me conclude with the words of one of these old May songs:—

The life of man is but a span,
He groweth like a flower;
He's here to-day, to-morrow gone,
And dead all in an hour.

The moon shines bright, and the stars give light
A little before it's day;
God bless us all, both great and small,
And send us a joyful May!



Evening by the Sea.

By this the drouping daylight 'gan to fade,
And yield his rowme to sad succeeding night,
Who with her sable mantle 'gan to shade
The face of earth and wayes of living wight,
And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

SPENSER.

IT was a glorious evening ! The summer sunset was burning out grandly upon the woods of Silverdale. I came to the beach about the time of low water ; and the shining pools left by the tide, looked like sentinels guarding the desert, till the waves' return. The sea had retired so far that I could hardly discern the distant line of the surge ; but there came through the air a subdued murmur of that voice whose softest tones are suggestive of majesty and mystery ; and even from the lonely sands there seemed to arise a faint hum of sea-music. . . . I hovered about the shore, charmed with the scene. . . . Out toward Lancaster the bay was smooth as a mirror, and the green shores of the Lune stood clear on the water-line, like islands of emeralds in a sea of silver. . . . Along the slope of the shore lay an irregular line of rubbish, composed

of shrivelled sea-weed, fragments of wood, broken pots, bottles, torn shoes, washed into a kind of frosted brown by the action of the sea; rags, bits of rope, and such like things, indicative of life on the ocean. This rubbish had been thrown up by a high tide some days before, and had lain bleaching and crisping in the sun, turned over, here and there, by people who roam and root about the high-water line, after the turn of the tide; in the hope of finding "something rich and strange." Upon the same slope was a cottage, called "The Bath House," which had been often lashed and flooded by the stormy waters. Near to it lay a broken mizen-mast, twenty yards long, and seven feet girth. It had been dragged out of the water's reach. A few yards off, there was a pine log; and, on the rocks to the south, a battered red boat lay bottom upwards, waiting for its owners, now, perhaps, rolling cold upon the ocean's bed. . . . Crossing the narrow channels, and patches of moist verdure, nearest the shore, I went a little seaward, upon the track made by fish-carts on their way to the nets. Towards the water I saw straggling figures; here and there a solitary fisherman sauntering shoreward, with his long shadow on the sands before him. Far away out, the smoke of a steamer trailed through the air; and nearer, three or four white small sails were gliding over the water, lit by the setting sun. . . . Now, from the northward, a great herd of cattle moves slowly across the sand, on their way from Kent's Bank to the Wharton shore. From head to hoof they show distinctly between me and the setting sun, as their legs play quaintly on in intermingling motions; and every whisk of their tails made a clear, though evanes-

cent mark in the air. The lowings of the herd, the barkings of the dogs, and the shouts of the drivers, hurrying their cattle across those dangerous sands, sound strangely impressive. It brings to mind many tales of adventure, and fatal disaster, connected with the ground they are treading. Even whilst I am writing, I remember that, about a fortnight after I had seen that herd of cattle cross, three of the finest young men in Silverdale were overtaken by the tide, about the same spot, and drowned there; in sight of their friends on shore.

As I came slowly up from the beach with my yielding senses steeped in the pensive splendour of the scene, I halted to look around. . . . In a bosky dingle, close by the road, a solitary throstle was chanting loud and clear upon a lazy-swinging bough, like a blithe lad playing at rantipole, or the jolly clerk of Copmanhurst carousing in his woodland cell. Farther up, among the woods and gardens, the leaves were all a-tremble with wild music. The white road was irregularly bordered with dusty half-trodden grass, strewn, here, with bits of stone, and there with a few cockle shells, thrown out from a wayside cottage. On the right hand, a tuft of nettles and a low thorn-bush were clustered close to the wall of a small orchard, over which spreading boughs of thick-blossomed apple-trees hung in a rich gush, as if there was no room for any more of them inside. On the left, where the grass border was broader, a few dusty daisies,—those cottage children of the flower-world,—peeped out upon the roadside; their simple beauty shining through the smirching veil of their birthplace. Close by the common trod, they smiled away their time, looking

aloft with sunny eye, unenvious of the garden flowers on the other side of the wall. The contented elves did not seem to know that they were dusty. . . . In this grove of speary firs, the birds are twittering, and pruning their wings, upon the branches nearest the road, and almost within reach of me. They look at the lounging traveller, out of those little wondering jewels of theirs. One of them gushes forth a silvery roulade; and hops to the next twig, which swings up and down, as if dancing a welcome to its pretty comrade. The bird gives another look at me out of the corner of his eye, and then carols away again in full-throated glee,—not much afraid. . . . Twilight is stealing on! The fading day is suffused with the last glory of the sunken sun; and the commonest objects are robing in a beauty which seems to have more of heaven than earth in it. The rude realities of noon are melting into a strange loveliness at the touch of that power, whose gauzy fringe of dreams trails on the golden skirts of day; and all things seem to be stilling down to a noiseless thrill of adoration. . . . It is the hour when forlorn wanderers, peeping in at cottage doors, hear mothers croodling soft lullabys to their drowsy babes, and feel sad as thoughts of home and childhood steal into their hearts! . . . Oh, meek hour of shadowy beauty! what strange thoughts, what smouldering tendernesses, what pensive ecstasy thou hast power to waken! . . . Twilight is stealing on, and “the star that bids the shepherd fold” is gleaming aloft.

O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things,—
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the c'erlaboured steer;

Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
What'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gathered round us by thy look of rest ;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

Soft hour ! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart ;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way,
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay ;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns ?
Ah, surely nothing dies but something mourns !

It is easier now to distinguish the different songs of birds which have lingered behind the rest, to sing the day out. And those strange under-sounds, which, even in the loneliest dell, seem to sleep when the sun is aloft, now grow upon the ear, and drowse the spirit with a mystic spell. It seems as if the air was peopled with a choir of viewless minstrels, whose business was to take up the hymn of nature, when daylight lays his louder music by. . . . I stopped in my walk, and leaned upon a field-wall, to look around me. The kine are lowing aloud in this pasture, as if asking to be called home. In a distant farm-yard a dog barks ; and the song of a girl makes the listening ear of the valley tingle with pleasure. . . . Now, a wild bee goes bazoning by, pleased with the spoil he is carrying home from the flowers of Silverdale ; and, from yon brown upland, where the ploughman's horses are wending slowly from the field, a clear jingle of chains comes through the air. . . . Now the wind gives a drowsy sough along the vale,—like a man turning over in his sleep,—and then dies away into silence again. In the east, the crescent moon is gliding aloft, to

take her night-watch in the sky. The tree-tops are still ; and the birds are dropping off for the night into their green chambers. But in the deepening stillness the surge of the ocean grows louder upon the ear ; and now I see that the sands I left so lately are fast silvering over with the rising tide. The shores of Morecambe are fading away, and the top of Arnside Knot grows dim. And yet I will linger a little while. . . . Here comes a brown-faced youth round the corner of the road, with a mash-tub in his arms. He is taking short steps ; I suppose, because the tub is heavy, and perhaps a little hot. He doesn't notice me, however, but goes whistling into the stable-yard close by, and I see no more of him. . . . Now a coatless mason comes, under the tree, on the cross-road. He has a dinner-basket on his arm, and a tin can, with a wire handle, in his hand. A little ruddy girl, with a doll clipt in her arms, is holding on by his shirt sleeve, and chattering to him in silvery trebles, as she now lilts a bit, now trots on by his side. . . . There is a lull again for a few minutes. . . . Anon, a healthy-looking lad comes capering up. He is dressed in a blue smock, and patched fustian trousers. He is kicking up the dust on the road, and indulging in frantic chuckles of independent glee, as if he didn't like to see the world so still, and was determined that quietness should not have it all its own way. He sees me looking at him ; but he evidently doesn't care a straw for that. He has something like a clean towel under his arm ; and I shouldn't wonder if his mother has been sending him with clothes home from the wash, and he is coming back with the money. He looks at me critically for a moment or so,

and,—it is all over. I am disposed of at once, to the satisfaction of his unsophisticated mind, and away he goes again, singing and knocking his heels together in a kind of sidelong dance, utterly at variance with all known rules of human motion, and he is out of sight in a minute. I hear him still trying to invent new noises, as he capers away up the road. “There goes a king!” think I. . . . There is nothing astir again for a few minutes, till a slipshod lass comes out of the door of the inn, and walks across to the field gate on this side, crying, “Coop, cup, cup, cup!” The cattle in the field leave off grazing, and come, all at once, towards the gate. The slipshod lass lets them out, and as they cross the road to the shippon in the inn yard, she gives the last of them a slap. . . . It is milking time! . . . I left the darkening vale, and came up slowly towards my quarters. In the little embowered shop, where the post-office is, one candle was dimly lighting the gloom; and in a great walled garden opposite, I heard the clear sounds of a piano, accompanied by some sweet voice.

There was very little astir when I got to the inn; and I had not been seated in my room five minutes before the landlord entered and said,—

“Well; you’ve been down to th’ sands. I heard yo come in. If you’ll be up in good time i’ th’ mornin’, you’ll see maybe eighty or a hundred fishin’ boats in the bay,—like a fleet comin’ up to tak th’ place. I could like yo to see that. . . . But you’ll be cold here. Would yo like a bit o’ fire?”

“No; I shall do for to-night.”

“Well, but; we’ve a good fire i’ th’ kitchen; an’ there’s

nobody in but our Stephen, an' Mr. Platt. . . . Now Mr. Platt is a humorous man, an' varra good company. Ye come in a bit, an' sit down, as if nowt was. Let me go first. Don't let on that I've said owt, now?"

"All right. I'll come."

In about ten minutes I followed the old man into the kitchen. He sat smoking in an arm-chair by the chimney nook; and he invited me to take a seat beside him. On the other side of the table sat Stephen the landlord's son, a fine, tall young fellow; and, by his side, there was a kind-faced man, long, lithe, and hearty, though considerably past middle age. He sat with one leg over the other, and his hands folded on his knee. His eyes were turned to the floor; and he was humming a drowsy tune, heedless of all about him, till the landlord said,—

"Come, Mr. Platt; wakken up! what; ye're buzzin' like a bummle-bee in a fox-glove! This is a gentleman that's goin' to stop with us a few days."

"Oh; how d'ye do, sir," said the old man; "how d'ye do? Ye see, I'm a bit elevated. I've been dinin', as some folk call it. Now, if it was a poor chap, they'd say I was drucken. But, as I'm noather poor nor rich, I reckon I'm gettin' on-ish,—splashed a bit,—or whatever ye like, that means truth taper't off to a comfortable point. There's o' sorts o' names for it;—'Half-seas-over;' 'Three sheets i'th wind;' 'Touched wi' th' sun;' 'Damp;' 'Steeped;' 'Foggy;' an' such like. . . . But it's all one. I'm drucken. An' it's all long o' bein' fond o' red herrin', sir. . . . A red herrin's as good as an umbrell for keepin' a man dry. But it's expensive diet, for o' that. It makes

a body so bad to sleck. Bring me another dobbin, missis !”

“Comin’, Mr. Platt !”

“Mis-ter Platt ! Now, if there aught that I don’t like from a friend—it’s that ! . . . I say, sir, never call me Mis-ter Platt, if yo please. . . . Owd Joe the currier is my name ! They all know me here. . . . Daycent chap ; an’ of a good breed. Frae Ribble side, I come, sir. There’s a deal i’ breeds, mind yo ; oather o’ cattle or Christians, an’ it’s hard to tell which is which, sometimes. But, keep ’em off kindred, an’ cross ’em wi’ good sorts, if you want ’em to prosper. Are yo laughin’ at my owd hat ?”

“Nay ; I was thinkin’ you was quite right.”

“Oh ; thank you, sir. . . . ’T first i’ th’ family. Come, I like a man o’ discernment. . . . Ye’ve a rare pair o’ boots on, sir. . . . Now, listen to me. If there be anything that I know well,—it’s the natur o’ leather. Aye ; Joe the currier hasn’t forgotten th’ owd craft yet. Now, leather loses its natur in about two years, as a rule. . . . Feel at my boots. They’re as kind as kid. These are never polished. Mind, I keep a pair for Sundays for daycency. But blackin’ kills leather ; there’s vitriol in it. I’ll tell ye what’s a good thing. If ever ye have your boots blacked, rub ’em over with neat’s-foot oil ; let it sink in ; and then wipe ’em with a dry cloth. They’ll shine as well as ever. An’ when ye come in with ’em slutchy, wash th’ dirt off, an’ wipe ’em with a cloth ; an’ then set ’em in a cool place to dry ; for fire kills leather, too, mind ye. Well ; when your boots are dry, rub ’em weel wi’ currier’s dubbin’. They’ll last twice as long.”

"Do you work at the trade now?"

"No. You see, I hev a bit o' property; an' I've come to spend my days wi' owd Buckstick, i'th corner, an' these good-tempered bowster-yeds i' Silverdale. But, you must come an' hev your tea wi' me. Will ye, sir? Mind, I'm a man o' my word. . . . Ye shall hev cockles, an' flooks, an' beef-steaks,—an' a bacon collop as big as a barrel-stave. . . . As for drink,—ye shall choose for yoursel'; an' what I haven't I'll get. I've a few books, too. Shakespeare!—

Now is the winter of our discontent,
Made glorious summer by the sun of York
And all the clouds—

I'll tell you what it is, sir. If I had takken pains wi' mysel', I might ha' been a shinin' character. But I was fond o' company, an' would see the world. Now, it's far on i'th afternoon wi' me; it'll be dark soon;—an' ye'll see no more of owd Tom. . . . Eh, my! . . . Will ye believe it, sir? I was once a Sunday-school teacher in a cock-pit! . . . True; by Jupiter! . . . But it was all for fun, ye know; besides, I was young an' foolish, then."

"You're gettin' wiser now, Mr. Platt;" said the landlord's son.

"I'm as wise as thee, hooivver, Tulip-nose!" said the old man, starting to his feet; "an', considerin' my age, I'm as firm as a gravelock. Look here! . . . Attention! Eyes right! . . . (Lend me your stick, sir, if you please. Thank you!) . . . Shoulder arms! . . . Eh, Stivven; owd lad. For two pins aw'd run tho through! . . . Here's your stick, sir. God bless your lives, I wouldn't hurt

a fly! Stivven; thou knows I'm strong. Owd Joe, the currier! . . . Come, I'll give you a song:—

Heigho; Stanley for ever!

Stanley for ever!

Stanley for ever!

Heigho; Stanley for ever, yet."

(Enter the Landlady.)

"Eh; Mr. Platt. You make such a noise. Do *not* sing so loud. It's gettin' late; an' we've some strangers just come in. Bridle a little bit, I pray yo."

"Noise! Do you call that a noise, owd lady? Why, ye've no soul for music! Come, never mind, I'll tell ye a tale. Mun I?"

"Aye, aye;" said the landlord, laughing; "tell us a tale."

"Very well; I will. But, ye know, now, that if I don't sing it, I shall stut like a,—locomotive engine. I'd better sing it,—

It's of an owd farmer mendin' his plough;

Tooral looral, right fol laddady;

It's of an owd farmer"—

(Re-enter the Landlady.)

"Now, Mr. Platt. Do be said."

"Well, come; let's drop it. . . . I'm a gentleman, every inch. Bin i' France. I hev, sir. Worked i' Paris, Owd Joe, the currier! When I was i' Paris, I gate drucken wi' red ink. . . . Here's your health, sir!"

(Sings again.)

Around the brow of blue-eyed Sue,

The auburn ringlets curl;" —

"Nay, nay," said the landlord, "do oblige us for once. Ye know how your voice sounds through th' house."

"Oblige ye! I am obligin' ye! Ye might hev a funeral i'th hole. It's warse nor bein' i'th' stocks. One could sing there. If I owe ye ought, I can pay."

"We know that. But ye hear what th' missis says; an' I know she's not i' good health just now."

"Then, I'll have a bit o' fun to mysel'. (*Croons in a low tone.*) Didder-um, didder-um, didder-um-dum-dum!"

"Ye'll nivver mend," said the landlord, laughing.

"Mend! Can you paint the lily, owd Buckstick, or gild refined gold? . . . Talkin' about that, I was i' Ulverstone t'other day, an' there was a lot o' chaps actilly whitewashin t' sun."

"Whitewashin' th' sun," cried Stephen.

"Aye! I mean th' 'Sun Inn,' yo barn owl! . . . I met 'Mop Geordie,' too, at t' same time, an' I hardly knowed him. Th' owd lad was disguised in a clean shirt. . . . But, never mind. . . . Thou sees how I'm snubbed, Stivven. Thou'll never turn th' back of owd Joe, wi'to lad?"

"Never!"

"That's reight! Gi' me thi' hand! . . . Eh, I am a foolish man. . . . Bring me another dobbin. Sorrow will have ale; an' I'm of a melancholy breed. . . . Stivven, lad; they say thou'rt going to get wed. (*Sings.*)

He walked behind, and hung his head
To hide a twinkling eye;
And, when they laid her down i'th ground,
He made a shift to cry.

Now, I'm not so hard-hearted as that. I believe I should cry if the devil was buried. I say, sir; ye shall hev a sail i'

my boat. I've a boat o' my own. Stivven; thou hears me! He shall hev a sail. Owd Joe keeps his word,—drunk òr sober. But there's a lot o' ye chaps that'll say more in a minute than ye'll stand to in a month."

Here he slowly dropped his chin, as if done up; and in a few minutes he fell asleep, muttering something about "a bad cold," and having a stocking lapped round his throat when he went to bed.

"Quite tired to night," said the landlord. "A little sleep 'll do him good. He's a great favourite with us in Silverdale. He's so straightforward,—an' a very feelin' man too. Now, if any poor body comes to trouble, he's one of the first to put down his sovereign for 'em,—an' does it freely an' all. When he's sober, now, he's very little to say; but there's plenty o' fun in him, even then. You should have heard one day when there was a man here fra Sedbergh, tellin' an impossible tale about a dog that could go i'th night time, an' pick marked sheep out o'th flock, an' drive 'em fifteen mile, to meet th' maister at market i'th mornin'. Well, Mr. Platt thought he was drawin' th' long bow a bit, an' he was determined he shouldn't have it all his own way; so he said that he knew of a dog upo' Bleasdale fells that did the very same thing, an', beside that, it actilly sowed th' sheep at a fair market price, an' then brought th' money home in its mouth. . . . Well, ye know, th' man stared; for that was a clipper. Th' owd lad there never let on, but smoked away, as solemn as a coffin plate;—an' they both waited a bit. At last, this man thought he'd try another tack; so he began about a duck of his that hed swallowed a snig, within an inch of a yard long, an' I forget

how far round, but it was a terrible deal. Then, th' owd lad at him again, an' said that a friend of his hed a duck that once swallowed a snig about an inch an' three-quarters longer than that, an' rather more i' girth; but, th' snig ran straight through, an' then turned round an' swallowed th' duck. Well, ye know, there was a pill! That licked t'other into fits. Th' man said that he didn't believe it. But he saw that he was dead bet; so he gav' in, an' said nea moor. . . . Oh, he can romance hard enough when he likes; but nothin' vexes him worse than downreet lies."

We sat silent a few minutes, and then the landlord said, "'They're goin' to let us alone to-night, I think. We shall get to bed soon; and I'll have a look round with yo i'th mornin', if ye like." I said I should be very glad; and then we lapsed into silence again. In three or four minutes more, voices were heard outside, and the door opened by a hardy old man, who came in laughing, followed by others. The noise awoke our sleeping friend, and he rose up, rubbing his eyes, and said,—

"Hello! who comes? . . . How now; ye black and midnight;—Eh; its Jossy Trotter, bigow! . . . an' Lile Robin, t' mason! . . . I say, Robin'—hesto brought thi fiddle?"

"No; I hev'n't."

"Well, then, go an fotch it, yo tweedlin' divvle, an' let's have a practice-neet! Thae knows 'Th' Hen Silver' comes off next week; an' there'll be owd songs to sing, an' owd capers to cut, an' sich like. What, we mun be ready!"

"Nay; aa'll nut ventur! If aa go for it to-neet, aa sha'n't git oot ageean."

"Aye, aye. Is it so? I see. Well, sit tho down. . . .
What, Squire! Thee, too! . . . Tol-de-dol! Gi' me
thi hond! 'Th' best fisherman i' Silverdale! Am I right,
Stivven?"

"Yes, I believe it is so."

"Well, why didn't yo say so at first, then, yo leather-yed!
. . . Come, lads, owd Tom stans this whet. What'll ye
have? I say, sir, these are friends o' mine; good friends,
every one. Isn't it so, Squire?"

"It is, Mr. Platt. Ye've no enemies at I know on—
except drink."

"Drink! Enemy! . . . Well; an' doesn't t' parson
tell us to love our enemies, Tulip Nose! Read, mark,
learn, an',—go to sarvice; yo moralizin' foo. , . . I'll
tell tho what it is, Squire. Good drink never were an enemy
to a wise mon. Thou may have a like aim fro that, what a
rare thing a wise mon is i' this world. I'll not say for thee
and me, Squire; because folk very seldom are as big foos as
other folk, till they're tried; an' they are not then some-
times. But there's a sayin' that monkeys, foos, and childer
are not fit to play wi' razors. Beside, thou remembers th'
owd song, 'Good Government is all.' Come, that's enough!
I don't like preachin' in a ale-house. Let's be jolly!"

"Aye; let's be jolly! Ye'll ha' me cryin' directly. Tak
this cheer."

"Well; hutch up lower. Now then. How arto gettin'
on, lad?"

"Oh; hard up," said the fisherman. "Hard up; like a
snail at th' end of his shell."

"Thee hard up, Squire!" replied old Tom, laying his

hand on the fisherman's shoulder. "I'll lend tho ten pound !
Thou'rt a good sort ! I'll lend tho ten pound, Squire !"

"Thank ye, Mister Platt," said the fisherman. "Hae ye
t' brass o' ye ?"

"No, lad, I haven't it,—not here. Thou thinks I'm
drucken. But I'll say th' same thing to-morn. I'll lend it
tho when I draw my rents."

"I knaw varra weel ye'd do it. But, then, I may happen
have a good draw mysel' afore then. Never mind ; yaar
good will's naa warse. Aa'm varra mich obliged to ye.

. . . Come, aa'll gi' ye a toast :—

Curious folk hev curious wishes ;
Success to men, and death to fishes."

"Come," said Jossy Trotter, "aa'll give anudder :—

Here's health to the livin', an' peace to the dead,
An' wishin' poor men may never want bread."

"There's a varra good feelin', now, about that yan," said
Squire. "Joshua, strike up a bit ov a ditty. Don't let's
dee i't shell."

"I's nut in singin' tune," replied Jossy. "My heead aches."

"Never mind," answered Squire. "We shall awlus ache
somewheers, as lang as we're livin'. Strike up 'T' Miller.'"

"Now," said the landlord, "sing low, and shut that door."

At length old Jossy laid down his pipe, and cleared his
throat ; and closing his eyes, he sang in a drawling voice, an
old ballad, called "The Miller and his Three Sons." It
is given in some collections of the ancient songs of the
English peasantry, but I never heard it before. When
this was over, they fell into talk about foot racing, for which
the Silverdale lads are famous. The old currier was asleep
again ; and, being tired myself, I slipped off to bed.



On the Dart.

CHAPTER I.

Oh let me stray
With thee, sweet Dart, and tread thy pleasant marge,
What time the liberal mountain flood has filled
The urn of Cranmere.

CARRINGTON.

SOUTHWARD, ho! For the first time in my life, I am going to the southern part of my native land,—of which I have heard so much and seen so little. In my experience, I have found that, as a rule, we northern folk know very little of the beauty of the south of England, and, therefore, with a kind of proud prejudice, we are apt to think of that part of the island as a country in which the scenery is tamely pretty, and the people a degenerate brood of pithless and finicking triflers. I can only say that this is a tremendous mistake. But I find that we in the north have not got all the prejudice to ourselves. On the first day after my arrival in Dartmouth, one of the principal shopkeepers in the town said to me,—“Live in the north of England! I wouldn’t live in the north of England

if they would give it to me!—except to make money there, and bring it home to spend.” Indeed, I may say that we know too little of one another. The people of Dartmouth are as far from London as we are in Manchester; and they see less of it than we do. We know still less of the country than we know of the people of the south. There are scenes down here, in Devonshire, which, for their special beauty, are unrivalled in all the world; and, in spite of our old northern saying about “Pendle-hill, and Peny-gent, and Little Ingleborough,” there are higher hills in the weird and picturesque wilds of Dartmoor than any in England, south of the Lake district.

Southward, ho! It was seven in the morning when I left Manchester for Dartmouth. Rain was falling drearily through the sooty and sulphuric air; and the streets had a lousy, cold, and abandoned look. I went by the Midland line; on which the route is picturesque, and the accommodation better than common. The land of smoky skies and inky streams,—the land of restless work, and restless enterprise,—fades away behind us, and we gradually glide into clearer air and greener landscapes,—but still the rain comes down. My fellow-travellers console themselves by saying, “Oh, it always rains in Lancashire. We shall soon leave these wet skies behind us!” But it was not so that day. The farther we went the harder it rained. All the way through the green hills and dales of Derbyshire there was one steady downpour from the leaden sky. All the way through the fertile plains of Middle England it came down thick-and-three-fold; and the fleeting landscape looked lush, and steeped, and soaked to overflowing. Drenched, disconsolate-

looking sheep wandered drearily about the great wet fields, like four-legged sponges, and here and there doleful cattle sheltered in clusters under wide-spreading trees. The rivers are all swollen, and great sheets of water lie upon the fields. We pass the towers of Worcester and Gloucester, and still the heavy rain comes down. At one of the stations, between Cheltenham and Bristol, the rails are covered, and the wheels of the train churn through the flood with a cheerless sound. "We are going by water!" "The sea cannot be far off!" says another. The passengers seem to be all travelling down into the west; and as we approach Bristol there is a growing anxiety about "catching the Dutchman." "Shall we catch the Dutchman?" says one. "What Dutchman?" says another. "The Flying Dutchman. The train that runs down to the Land's End. It waits for nothing!" We ran into the station at Bristol in a hurry; but the place where "The Dutchman" should have been was vacant. Like "Young Lochinvar," he was "off to the west;" so I turned into the refreshment room, and got my dinner quietly, after my seven hours' dreary ride.

As we steamed out westward again, at a quarter-past three, Bristol city, like all the rest of the world, looked wet and cheerless,—for the rain still came dreeping down; but I caught a glimpse of the tall spire of St. Mary Redcliffe; and, for a little while, I was lost in dreams of Chatterton,—“the marvellous boy; the sleepless soul that perished in his pride.” And now we are entering upon the country of apples, and orchards line the way as we roll along. The country is picturesquely varied in feature, and full of historic interest on both sides of the line. The Mendip hills are in full

view, and the beautiful Cheddar valley, so famous for its cheese. The ancient city of Wells, with its grand cathedral, and the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, where "Good King Arthur" lies at rest, are almost in sight. At Wrington, on the opposite side of the line, John Locke was born, and Hannah More lies buried. One of the oldest towns on the way is Taunton, which is in full view from the carriage windows. Two beautiful old towers of red sandstone, rich in architecture, rise out from the rest of the town. Taunton was one of the principal towns of the famous Ina, king of the West Saxons. Here he built a fortress in 680 ; and he seems to have been a kind of Saxon Moses amongst those rude warriors of the West, for he made wholesome laws and enforced them in that wild time ; and, if I am not mistaken, some of the laws of King Ina still form part of the common law of England. As we leave Taunton the rain ceases and the sky clears, and the first tinge of evening begins to touch the beautiful landscape with a softer beauty. Clean-fleeced sheep, whose backs are all aglow with bright red ruddle, are wandering about the rich pastures ; and, as we roll through the fertile valley of the Culme, famous for its eels, reedy eel-pools, and little swollen streams, and lodgments of water upon the fields, gleam beautifully in the rosy light of the setting sun. The picturesque variety and fertility of the country seems to increase as we run along. The next remarkable old town on our way-side is Cullompton. Half-hid in orchards and gardens, it clothes a green eminence within a stone's throw of the line. This town was given by King Alfred to his eldest son, Ethelward. This fact reminds one how bitterly every foot of ground in this part of England

has been fought over by the strongest races of mankind in succession, and no man who sees its great natural beauty and fertility can wonder that they should fight for such a land. The shades of night were deeper upon the sea as we came away from old Cullompton ; and soon the glimmering landscape was left to the unclouded light of a starry sky ; but, by their clear, cool influence, I caught sight of the ancient city of Exeter, upon a ridge, close by the south side of the line, with the great towers of the Cathedral overtopping all. And, now, the line, for several miles, runs along the shore of the river Exe, and the air begins to smell of the sea. As we roll away in the starlight, I got many a beautiful glimpse of the windings of the estuary. A short run through the green hills brought us from the Exe to the banks of the beautiful river Dart ; and, just as the clocks were striking ten, the lights of quaint old Dartmouth town were gleaming on the opposite side of the stream. A steamer was waiting to ferry us over ; and, in a few minutes, I was comfortably housed at "The Castle Hotel," a fine old hostelry upon the quay, overlooking the clear waters of this beautiful little land-locked harbour. And here I am, upon the Dart, at last ! I strolled about the town by moonlight ; and it reminds me more of an ancient continental town than any other town I have seen in England, except Chester, with which it has many features in common. Of this quaint old port, and its matchless river, I will say something in my next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

“ By breezy hills,
 And soft retiring dales, by smiling lawns,
 Bold headlands dark with umbrage of the groves,
 By towns and villages, and mansions fair,
 And rocks magnificent, the potent rush
 Of the mysterious ocean hath impelled
 Our bark to-day.”

CARRINGTON.



WE are sitting at breakfast, in the front room of the inn, close by the half-open window, which looks right upon the bay, or harbour, which Gilpin calls “the fair bright bay of Dartmouth ;” and of which he says, “The bay which the river Dart forms at its mouth is one of the most beautiful scenes upon the coast.” It is, indeed, a charming sight this bright morning, as we sit at breakfast in the quaint old hostelry, gazing upon the shipping rocking upon the sunlit water, fresh in from the open sea, which heaves and rolls outside the mouth of the river, within gunshot of where we are sitting. But my friend is in a hurry to see as much of Devonshire as possible in as little time as possible. He has “done” one half of the country in three days, and he is bent on finishing the rest, at a gallop, before the week is over. “Well ; what d’ye say ?” says he ; “will ye go ?” But I am too lazy, and contented with the scene I am in. “No. The Dart is beautiful enough for my short holiday ; and I would rather not try to see any other part of the world, just now.” “Well, then,” says he, jumping up ; “I’m off to the boat ! The train starts from the other side in five minutes !” And away he rushes down to the pontoon, wiping his mouth, and brushing the crumbs from his beard

as he goes. . . . And now, I am finishing my breakfast in peace, all alone, with the bright harbour of Dartmouth, and its fertile green hills, sloping softly down, rich in verdure from the summits to the water's edge, all before me. Sailors and hotel-loungers, and motley stragglers, are lounging about the outer ledge of the half-open window, and all the morning life of the little seaside town comes surging by in the sunshine. The staid old waiter and I seem to have all the place to ourselves; and he brings me a pot of Devonshire cream. . . . Oh, reader, I never tasted cream till I came down here; and I shall never forget it, now, the longest day I have to live! There is nothing like it anywhere else in all the wide world. . . . But the door opens, and a stout, middle-aged gentleman, with bushy grey beard, steps in and looks round, and then retires, closing the door behind him. He has no sooner disappeared than the old waiter glides in again, with an air of importance, and says, "Did ye see that gentleman, sir, that looked in, just now?" "Yes." "That's Sir Samuel Baker, sir, the great African traveller." I jumped up, and looked out. There he was, walking briskly along the pier,—a strong square-built, hardy, English-looking man, about five feet seven in height, with a quiet, frank countenance, and a thick grey beard. "And now, look yonder, sir," said the old waiter, pointing to the landing-place, in front of the hotel; "d'ye see that gentleman coming up the steps from the boat?" "Yes." "That's the Right Honourable Thomas Milner Gibson, sir. He came in here last night in his yacht, 'The Resolution,' sir." And there he stood before me on the pier; the same lithe, graceful figure, nearly six feet high, and

“as straight as a pickin’-rod,” still. There he stood,—fresh from the breezes of the Channel,—the hero of many a stout political fray,—the true-hearted patriot, and the man of brilliant gifts. “The snowfall of time” lay thick upon his brow, but his face wore the same genial smile, and his eyes seemed as bright as in the old time. I could not help hoping that his days might yet be many in the land, and that he might rejoice in them all. . . . As I sit by the half-open window I can see and hear all that is going on outside. The fishermen’s wives come by, one after another, crying “Cockles!” and “Red Mullet,” and “Fresh Ray!” in different tones; and the landlady sends one of the servants out to “see what Sally has got, this morning,”—and the folk from Dittisham, who have come down the river with boat-loads of fruit, wander about the streets with baskets full of plums and apples. I hear it all, as I sit at breakfast; and I hear many a bit of straggling talk going on, close by the window. “Not much cider this year, Henry.” “I doubt not. . . . We had too many wet days.” “Wet days? It’s not the wet days, it’s the wet *weeks* that did it!” “We had a great deal o’ wet this time, sure-ly; and I doubt the wheat’ll suffer through it.” “Well; I don’t know. I hear that a good many o’ the farmers up our way got their wheat put into ‘wind-ricks’ in that catchy weather; and they won’t take much harm. But we may have a run o’ fine weather for the late harvest, yet.” “Well; I hope so. What, they’ll be finished in the Isle o’ Wight by this time?” “No doubt. They’re always a fortnight earlier in the Isle o’ Wight than we are on the Dart.” . . . The two glided away, out of hearing, along the street. The next

thing that comes under the window is the stout Irish gentleman who is staying at the hotel ; and who is known amongst the waiters as "Number Thirty-one." He is bargaining with an old boatman for a frisk on the river. The boatman asked whether he would like to go up the river as far as the village of Dittisham, or out to the old castle, at the mouth of the harbour. "Begorra," says he, "I don't care where ye take me, old boy, if ye'll only keep on the top o' the water. D'ye see the size o' me ? I'm a divul for sinkin' when I once begin ; an' I understand there's no stoppin' place between the top an' the bottom o' the river Dart. An' I'd rather come home and have fish to my dinner,—than lave myself in the water to be a dinner for fish ; so keep on the top as well as ye can, my buck, av ye plaze." "Oh ; no fear o' that, sir," says the old boatman. And away they go. . . . But the weather is beautiful, and the day is running by ; and, through the kindness of a good Lancashire friend of mine, whose fine yacht, "The Derwent,"—one of the most notable vessels on the coast,—lies rocking in the sunshine, yonder, in front of the hotel, I have a chance of seeing the whole navigable course of the Dart, from its mouth up to the ancient town of Totnes. A rare treat, and not to be neglected ; so I sally forth into the sunshine, full of pleasing anticipations. And now,—who is this that bears down upon me from the distance, with rolling gait and genial smile. It is my good friend Mustapha Rodwell, R.A., who has come over from Torquay to join me in the trip. "What, ho !" cries he.

Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for shame :
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are staid for.

In a few minutes our pleasant little company is all on deck ; and away we go down the stream ; so that we may begin our trip from the very mouth of the river upwards.

Beginning our upward course from the open sea, where the entrance to the harbour is almost hidden by the overlapping shores, we first come to what is called "The Narrows," where the river is only 250 yards wide ; and here, standing opposite to each other, upon the rocky, yet well-wooded shores, "like twin guardians of the harbour," are the moss-grown remains of two old castles, erected in the reign of Edward the Fourth. The ruins of the castle and church of St. Petrox, backed by the wooded steep on the western side, look beautifully picturesque. Passing a charming creek, called "Warfleet," we come to the ancient village of Kingsweir, of which it is said,

Kingsweir was a market town
When Dartmouth was a furze down.

On the opposite side is the quaint old town of Dartmouth. Low down by the shore lie the wharves and warehouses of the old town, with "lofty houses, having carved panelling and ceilings, with oaken staircases with ornamental balusters, once the palaces of her merchant princes, but now let out in flats to the poor." The town rises, tier above tier, clothing the sides of the thickly-wooded hills with ancient houses, quaint little courts, and stairs, and winding passages, with the venerable tower of St. Saviour's Church overtopping the lower part. At this point the scene on each side is very striking. A little beyond the town we passed the great naval training-ship, the *Britannia*, with her

consort, the Hindostan. The Britannia was formerly known as the Prince of Wales (120 guns), and replaced the old Britannia, broken up in 1870. She is connected with the Hindostan by a gangway. Here the future officers of the English navy undergo careful training. Passing this great floating college, which seems to stand as high out of the water as one of our largest Lancashire factories, verdant hills line the sides of the stream all the way, richly green to the water's edge; and we pass one beautiful creek after another, where the artist and the lovers of nature love to linger for a while. And yonder, upon a commanding green eminence, overlooking the stream and half hidden by rich woods, stands Greenway House, associated with the name of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the birthplace of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, "who set out to discover the remote countries of America, and to bring off these *salvages* from their diabolical superstitions to the embracing of the gospel." A little beyond this, upon the opposite shore, we come in sight of the pretty village of Dittisham, so famous for its plums. The village wanders up the green hill-side, peeping out here and there, from its groves and gardens. Behind the village, "Beacon Hill" rises six hundred feet. In former times this beacon was used to give warning when hostile ships from the opposite coast of Brittany were discovered in the offing, when

Swift to east and swift to west, the warning radiance spread.
For o'er the deep the invader saw, along each southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire.

Dittisham is a place of great resort for pleasure, in these parts; and, there, it is no less noted for its fruit, than for the

fresh shrimps and cockles taken from the river. The village is a pretty picture from our deck ; and, as we glide away from where the plums of Dittisham hang down into the Dart's translucent wave, our eyes linger upon the scene. And still the bright green hills, and rich woods, cling to us all the way, with many a lovely creek between, wandering sweetly up into the fertile land. A little beyond Dittisham, we are in sight of Sandridge, an Italian villa, built by the first Lord Ashburton, on the site of an older mansion. This is the birth-place of John Davis, the celebrated Arctic voyager, whose little ships, the "Sunshine," of fifty tons, and the "Moonshine," of thirty-five tons, sailed from Dartmouth on June 7th, 1575, and discovered the passage between Greenland and North America which bears his name. And still a succession of richly-wooded valleys, with hill beyond hill rising in the distance, green to their summits, glide behind our onward way. Passing a deep inlet, called "Bow Creek," which admits vessels of one hundred tons burden, and the quiet little fishing hamlet of Duncannon, we come in sight of the magnificent woods of Sharpham, which in a fine semicircular sweep bound the western side of the stream. The whole of the steep hillside is densely covered with fine oak foliage ; and it is certainly one of the grandest masses of woodland I ever saw. The branches at the foot of this grand woodland steep hang down into the river. Soon after leaving Sharpham Woods the stream begins to take a straighter course, and we get a fine view of the tower of Totnes old church, overtopping the houses of the town upon a steep, with the wild peaks of Dartmoor in the distance. The river narrows as we approach Totnes,

and the shores are haunted by the heron. And now here we are at the foot of the bold eminence upon the slope and summit of which stands the old town of Totnes, or "The projecting Headlands." We have little more than half-an-hour for a peep at the town before the turn of the tide calls us back again. We have just time to walk up the steep main street, and to get a peep at the fine old church, and the ruins of the castle. The steep main street is wonderfully clean, and quaint in appearance. Many of the houses are ancient, with carven projecting upper stories, supported by pillars. Down one side of the main street a stream of clear water runs along a clean stone channel, close by the foot path. The whole town has a sweet, sleepy, and antique appearance; and there does not seem to be much going on. I can almost believe one of the natives who said to me, as he pointed to the main street, "If you were to fire a gun down that street, sir, any time after eight o'clock in the evening, you wouldn't hurt anybody." From the look of the place I can almost believe it; although I understand that there is a large woollen manufactory here; and the fishery is good; and the neighbourhood abounds in chocolate and madreporé marbles; and the country around is fertile and highly cultivated. We found the church a fine old edifice of red sandstone erected by Bishop Lacey, 1432. It contains an ancient pulpit, richly carved; and an ancient screen, in quaintly-carved stone-work. Behind the church stands the old Guildhall, a very curious building. We had no time to visit the grand old castle of Berry Pomeroy, about three miles off,—we had just time to see the ruins of Totnes Castle, at the head of the town, built by Jud

Hall de Totnes, in the time of the Conqueror. As we hurried back, to catch the turn of the tide, I looked again towards the bleak hills of Dartmoor,—which is, even now, the wildest waste in all England,—and I longed for a ramble among its weird glens and craggy tors. Our return trip, down the river, was full of fresh interest ; for, all the way, the scenery presented new pictures, seen from an opposite point of view. The Dart is one of the most beautiful rivers I have ever seen. It has been called “The Rhine of England ;” but, with the exception of the castle-guarded “narrows” at the mouth of the river, it is wholly unlike that far-famed historic stream. The Dart is like itself, and nothing else. It is lined all the way by richly fertile rolling hills, noble old woods, and beautiful creeks ; and is, perhaps, the most charming river of its kind in all England.

The remainder of my brief holiday was spent in a trip out to sea ; a visit to Torcross, and “Slapton Lea,” a curious fresh water lake a few miles west of Dartmouth ; and to rambles about the quaint nooks of the old town, which abounds with interest for the antiquary, and the lover of the picturesque.

I came away from Devonshire too soon for my liking ; and with a strong desire to revisit that beautiful and interesting part of my native land again as soon as I can.

CHAPTER III.

A schipman was ther, wonyng fer by west :
 For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouth,
 He rood upon a rouncey, as he couthe,
 In a gown of faldynge to the kne,
 A dagger hangyng in a laas hadde he
 About his nekke under his arm adoun,
 The hoote somer hadde maad his hew al broun ;
 And certainly he was a good felawe.

But of his craft to rikne wel the tides,
 His stremes and his dangers him bisides,
 His herberge and his mone his lodemenage,
 Ther was non such from Hull to Cartage.
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake,
 With many a tempest hath his beard ben schake.

CHAUCER.

THIS passage in the Canterbury Tales shows that Dartmouth was reckoned somewhat amongst the ports of the west five centuries ago ; and, as I wander about the streets of that quaint, old town to-day I still meet with Chaucer's shipman, at every turn,—slightly changed in attire, certainly, but virtually the same hardy, weather-tanned good fellow, whose beard has been shaken by many a tempest. As he lounges about with slightly rolling gait, about the quay, or under the antique overhanging upper stories of the old houses, he has a dreamy, amphibious, yonderly look, as if he was thinking of the heaving billows, and adventurous witcheries of the great deep. And as long as the ocean laves the green shores of

old England her bold mariners shall "sweep through the deep, when the stormy winds do blow." The sea plays lovingly with the ferny combes, and verdurous slopes of this romantic land. With kindly dalliance it clings to this picturesque bit of the fringe of Old England, advancing and retiring, in fitful moods, among its fertile creeks, and needly rocks, its bowery hollows, and smooth bright beached margents, its gorges of wild crag and grand old woodland ; and its beautiful tidal rivers wander dreamily in and out among scenes of the softest, richest, rural beauty, lipping the weed-grown walls of many an ancient castle, and the gushing verdure of many a quaint old gardened hamlet in their changeful play. Wherever one goes everything smacks of the wholesome freshness of the saline breeze ; and yet no where else in England have I ever seen rich woods and orchards flourish so finely as they do here, down to the very edge of the sea. And all the air of this green, sea-washed Devonshire seems crowded with the stirring memories of a thousand years of English renown. This is, indeed, a land of romance, both in the peculiar beauty of its natural features, and in its association with men whose very names make the blood of an Englishman tingle in his veins ; for this is the native country of Martin, Frobisher, and of Davis, the Arctic explorer, who gave his name to Davis's Straits, and of bluff John Hawkins, and of that brave English sea-king, Admiral Blake, and of Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Francis Drake, and the great Duke of Marlborough. This is, also, the birthplace of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, of Ford, the dramatist, of Robert Herrick, of Peter Pindar, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Northcote, and Haydon, and Prout,

and Eastlake, and a host of others, whose names will wrestle hard with time. No wonder that Devonshire men should be proud of their native county; but, now that I see the land, I wonder very much that it is so little known to the people of the north of England, who wander so much farther a-field for scenes that are less inviting.

The harbour of Dartmouth is within gun-shot of the open sea, and, yet, it is so curiously folded in by the land at the mouth, that I found the entrance scarcely discernible from two or three miles' distance at sea; and the quaint old town rises in terraces, full of curious nooks, and stairs, and little antique courts, and winding passages, interspersed with bowery bits of greenery. It rises from the west side of the harbour, backed by a green hill, thickly-wooded to its summit. On the upper fringe of the old town, handsome residences overlook the scene, lapped in rich gardens and woods. Dartmouth reminds me more of a continental town than any other place I have seen in England, except Chester,—with which it has some features in common. I took up my quarters at "The Castle Hotel," a fine old hostelry, with two great bow-windows overhanging the lower storey. It stands upon the quay, looking right out upon the broadest part of the harbour; and there I found that, like Chaucer's "Tabard," in Southwark,—

The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esud atte beste.

This open street, or quay, in front of the hotel, is the principal promenade of Dartmouth. There the sailors and boatmen lounge about the water-side, chatting with passers-

by, whilst waiting for jobs ; and on a fine evening, all the town seems to come trooping by the windows of the inn,—on pleasure bent. As I stand in the doorway, sheltered by the overhanging upper storey, looking at the shipping, rocking upon the rising tide, I can hear the loud cawing of a colony of rooks upon the wooded steep above the town ; and doves are strutting about the pavement of the street, and flitting about the ancient gables hard by,—and I almost fancy the soft south wind brings the scent of roses from the gardens a little way off along the shore,—so pleasant are the charms of land and water wedded in this ancient man-nest by the sea. The view of the harbour is beautiful from the front of the inn, with the green hills sloping gently down to the water's edge, on the opposite side. And this pleasant land-locked harbour, on the Devonshire shore, has been the scene of strange events in days gone by. Here, on the 25th of March, 1190, Richard the Lion-hearted mustered the chivalry of England, and sailed for the Holy Land ; and from this port, in 1347, a large armament set sail, under Edward the Third, for the siege of Calais. In 1377, the town was plundered by the French. In 1404, the men of Dartmouth ravaged the coast of France. The following year the French again came in search of revenge, but were beaten back to sea, with a loss of four hundred killed, and two hundred prisoners. And, lastly, but not least interesting of all, it was from this harbour, in the month of July, 1620, that the Pilgrim Fathers set sail, in their two little vessels, the *Speedwell* and the *Mayflower*, freighted with one hundred souls, little dreaming that in so short a time as this they were to give rise, in the wilds of North

America, to one of the most powerful nations the world has ever seen. And, as I gaze upon the harbour of Dartmouth, now, "in the clear cold eve's declining," I can almost fancy that yonder, before me, are those two little ships, with their sad and sacred freight, still rocking upon the water, and ready to sail out upon the stormy Atlantic, in search of freedom beyond the sea. I can almost fancy this ; for the scene, as viewed from the front of the hotel, can be very little changed since that memorable July day, in the year 1620,—when Charles the First was King of England.

As I saunter about the doorway, delighted with all that is going on among the boats, and the shipping in the harbour, and with the curious features of Dartmouth life, as they play to and fro upon the street, I begin to know the old boatmen of the town, who lounge about on the pier, day by day, waiting for work. I begin to know them, by head-mark, and we chat together freely.

"Good morning, sir. Will ye be wanting a boat to-day, sir?"

"Not to-day. But I suppose I can get one to-morrow?"

"Well, you can get boats to-morrow, sir, of course, but *my* boat don't go out on Sunday, sir. It never did,—least-ways not for many years gone by,—an' it never shall. I hope no offence, sir ; but I think that if God gives I health and strength to work for six days o' the week, sir, it's a strange thing if I can't give He a few hours,—that's what I think. At the same time, sir, I allow every man his own opinion,—still hoping there's no offence, sir."

He is a fine, weather-beaten old mariner, and he is evidently quite serious about the matter ; so I quietly

change the subject, and, turning round, I begin to talk about the hotel where I am staying.

“That’s a fine old house,—‘The Castle.’”

“It is, indeed, sir ; no better house in all Devonshire for meat and drink than ‘The Castle,’ sir. I seen pretty games in that house, sir, in the old time, when I was a young man. There was a large room at the back of the old bar, sir, at that time. It was low in the ceiling, and wainscotted all round with black. The best men o’ the town used to frequent that room in those days, sir. I seen as many as twenty captains, all o’ different nations, drinking together in that room at one time ; and they all sung their own national songs, sir. Dartmouth harbour is not the same now as it was then. Yes ; there’s been a heap o’ money made in that house in my time, sir,—particular when the elections were going on. Lord bless ye, sir, ye see them two big bow-windows at the front ? Well, sir, I seen the one side at the one window, and the other side at the next window, a mouth-peltin’ one another to that degree that you’d think it was a shame they weren’t all hung long ago. Lord bless ye ! an’ I seen them heaving money into the street from them two windows in handfuls,—an’ all the town scramblin’ and tearin’ one another below to get hold of it. Yes, sir ; there’s been a heap o’ money squandered, and a heap c’ money made, in that house, sir, in my time.”

“I’ve no doubt of it. . . . Don’t you think we’re going to have a high tide to-night ?”

“Pretty well, sir. Now, if the wind had been strong the other way we’d have had it much higher. But, Lor’ bless ye,—this is nothing. I seen the tide three feet deep on the

street, there,—when they had to put a strong board up at the doorway of the hotel to keep it out of the house. Aye ; an' I remember one tide, many years ago, which was so high that people took their letters to the post-office in boats, down by the "Butter Row," there, at the end of the house. That was a tide, sir. Oh, no, sir ; this tide's nothing to what I have seen in my time."

Turning again towards the harbour, I drew the old man's attention to the little village of Kingsweir, on the opposite shore.

"They tell me," said I, "that,—

Kingsweir was a market town
When Dartmouth was a furzy down.

"So they say," replied he ; "but, Lor' bless ye, sir, I don't believe it. Look at it, sir ! Where is Kingsweir ? Why, there's nothing of it,—an' there never was ! No, sir ; Kingsweir ain't much compared wi' old Dartmouth. Why, ye might light up the whole place with a farthing candle !"

And thus we chat together till the tall, staid old waiter at the hotel beckons to me from the doorway, to say that dinner is ready ; so I bid the old boatman "Good day !"

"Good day to you, sir ! I'm sorry I can't take ye out to-morrow, sir ; but I shall be glad to serve ye at any other time, sir."

The view of the harbour from the dining-room is pleasant, and the life of the town plays to and fro past the window like the changing scenes in a panorama. Everything is clean and sweet, and the meals are good and bountiful, and I enjoy the whole thing immensely,—including many a fitful

chat with the staid old waiter, who is quite a character in his way ; and as I sit at dinner I hear the parrot at the end of the lobby noisily amusing himself in his quaint fashion,—whistling, and hooting, and barking, and mewing by turns ; now crying “Woigh !” to the carts as they pass the door, now whistling “The girl I left behind me,” with curious variations in the latter part of the tune, as if he had partly forgotten the original ; now calling for the waiter, and now crying, “Fitzgerald for ever ! hip, hip, hurrah !” with wonderful distinctness. He is evidently a bird of strong political tendencies, for he seems to take especial delight in this election slogan. But why “Fitzgerald for ever !” here in Dartmouth ? The thing puzzles me a little. Enquiring of the old waiter I find that the bird had lived at Horsham, in Sussex, during the time of Mr. Fitzgerald’s candidature for the representation of that borough, in the Conservative interest, and he had espoused that gentleman’s cause with so much enthusiasm during the conflict, that, like a faithful retainer, his mind had clung to the interests of his favourite political chieftain, through all the lapse of time and amidst alien scenes.

After dinner, I strolled out at the end of the town to the ancient castle, and the church of St. Petrox, which occupy a commanding position upon the craggy, wooded steep at the very mouth of the Dart, and looking right out upon the wild ocean. There, in that most romantic and secluded scene, I wandered and lingered till daylight darkened into the shades of night, returning to the old town by a beautiful winding walk, half-shaded by rich greenery, under the light of the moon.

Long before midnight the town was as still as a chapel. As I lay in bed I heard a solitary sailor on the pier hailing one of the vessels in the harbour, "Warfleet, ahoy!" I looked out. There he stood, on the end of the pier, clean and distinct, in the moonlight, and as solitary as the last man in a deserted world. Soon after this all was still again; and I fell asleep, lulled to repose by the dreamy lapping of the waves against the pier under my window.



JOHN HEYWOOD, Excelsior Steam Printing and Bookbinding Works,
Hulme Hall Road, Manchester.

Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek
München

W. B.



Waugh, Edwin

Waugh's complete works

Bd.: 6

1882

4 P.o.angl. 52 f-6

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11518128-1